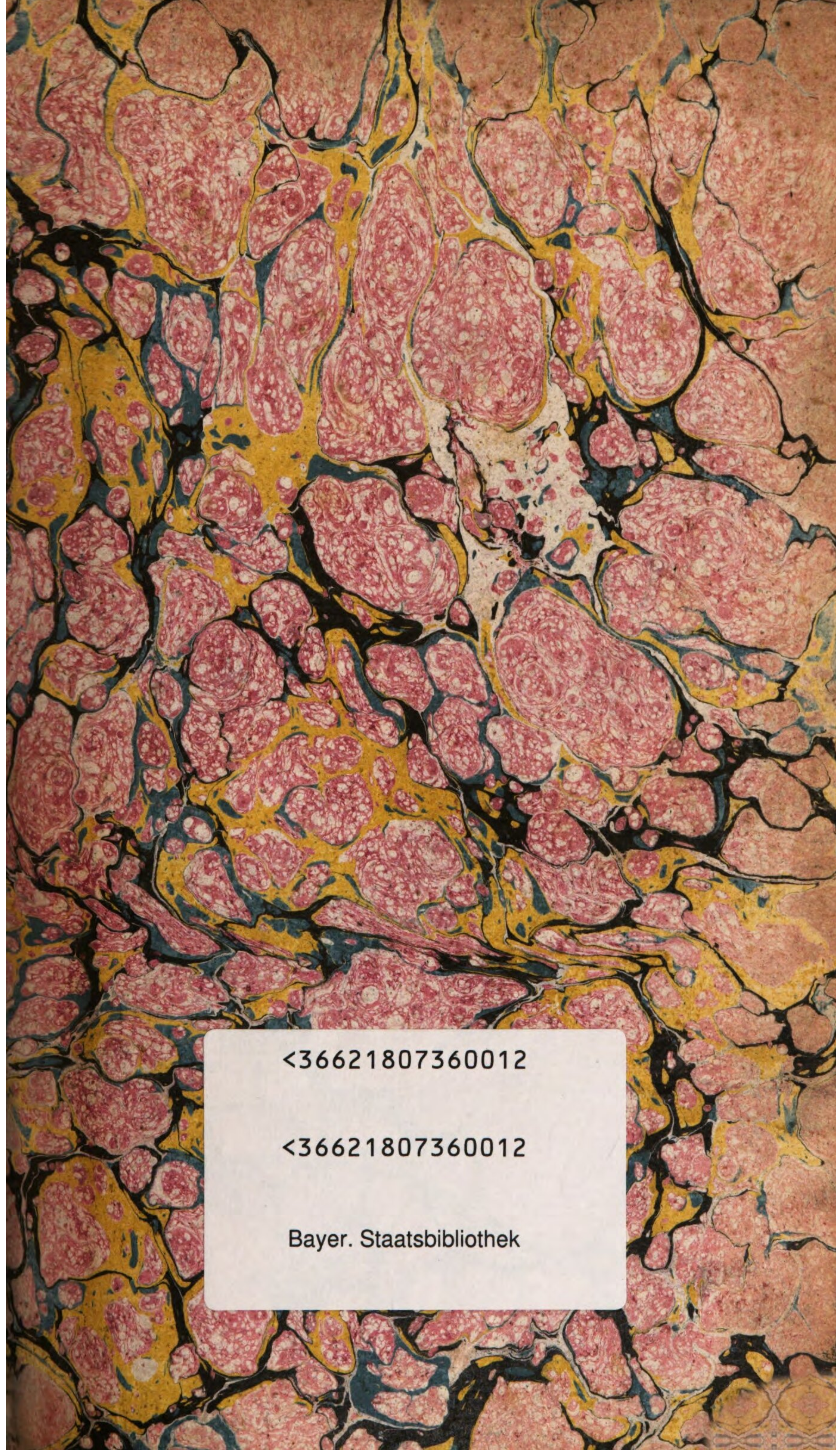








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Cicero

CATO AND LÆLIUS:

O R,

E S S A Y S

O N

OLD-AGE AND FRIENDSHIP:

B Y

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO.

W I T H

R E M A R K S,

By WILLIAM MELMOTH, Esq.

PROSIMUS, SI POSSUMUS, OTIOSI. Cic.

A NEW EDITION.

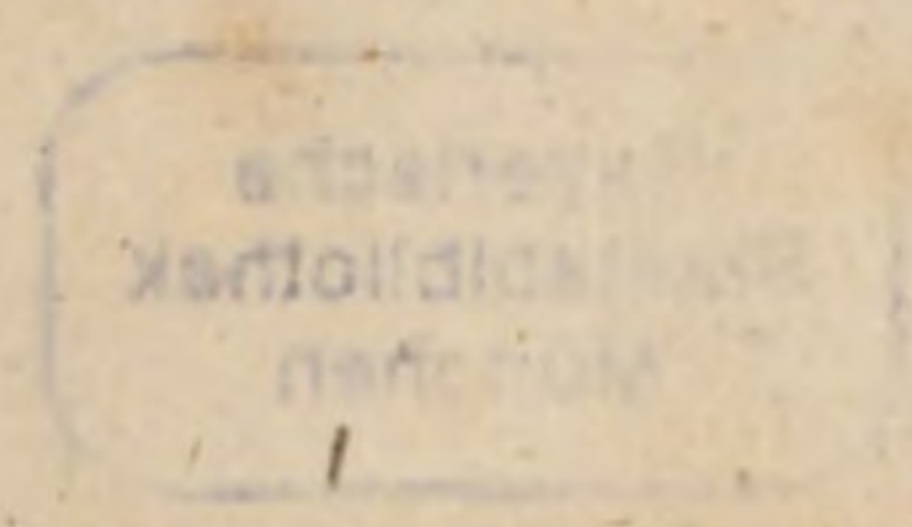
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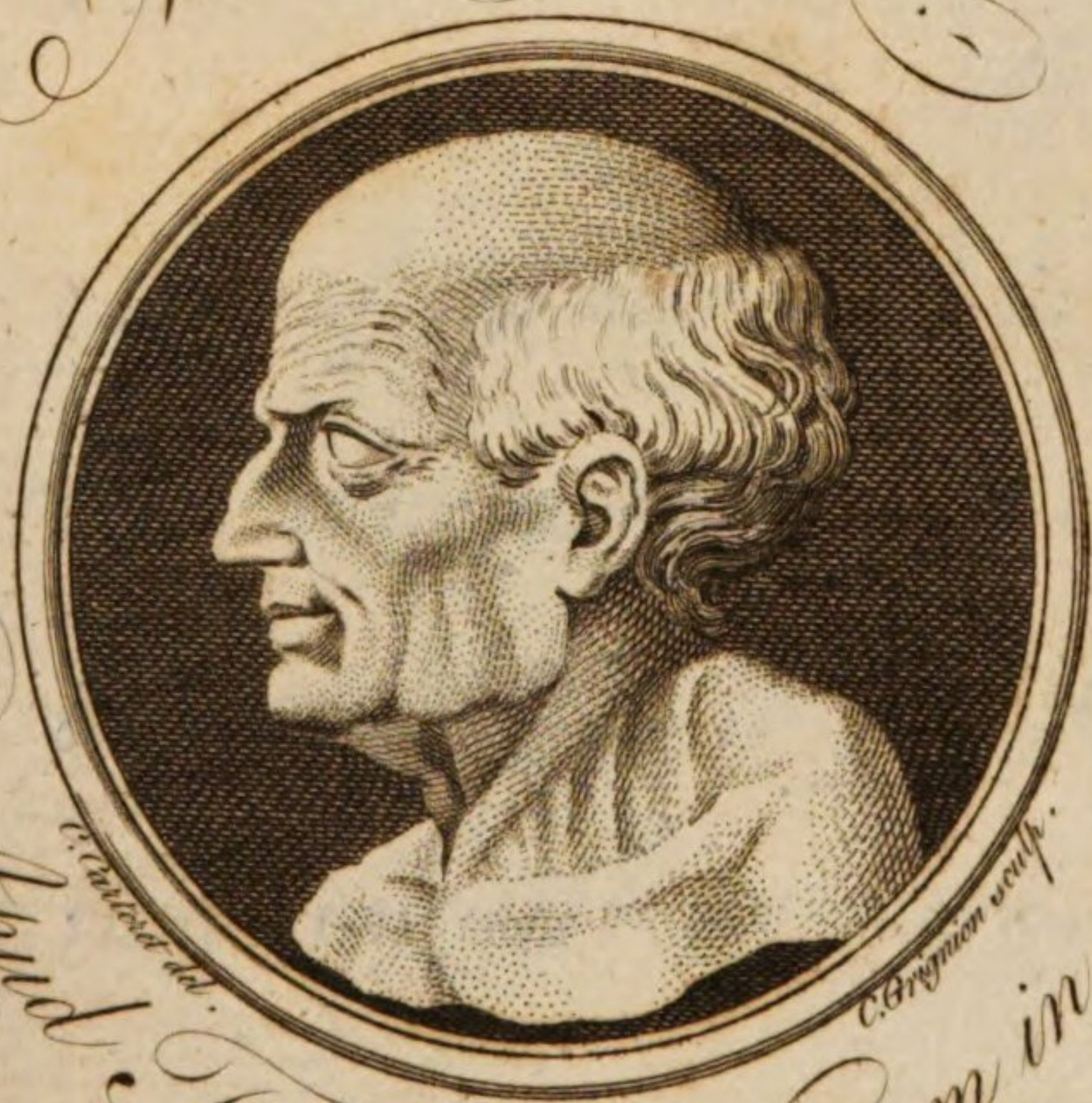


C A T O:
OR, AN
ESSAY ON OLD-AGE:
BY
MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO.

— Petite hinc, Juvenesque Senesque,
Fixem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis.

PERSIUS.

M. Porcius Cato.



Ad Fulvium Ursinum in gemma.

CC AA T O O

ESSAY ON OLD AGE

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

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ADVERTISEMENT.

*THE following treatises are
two of the most valuable
pieces of the moral kind, that have
been transmitted to us from the
antients. The subject upon which
they respectively turn, “ comes
“ home*

ADVERTISEMENT.

*“ home (as Lord Bacon says of
“ his own essays) to every man’s
“ business and bosom :” and the
noble principles they inculcate are
supported and enforced with all
the advantage that elegance of
genius can give to truth of senti-
ment. It was thought, therefore,
that an attempt to introduce them
to the acquaintance of the Eng-
lish reader, in a manner not alto-
gether unworthy of the originals,
would be no useless employment of
the*

ADVERTISEMENT.

the translator's leisure. To this end, he has endeavoured to pursue the same method, in conveying the sense of his great author, as Cicero himself observed when he deigned to be engaged in an office of the same nature: Non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omnium verborum vimque servavi. Non enim ea me annumerare lectori putavi oportere, sed tamquam appendere.*

* Cic de opt. gen. Orat. 5.

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This it seemed proper to premise with respect to the two versions: what farther appeared necessary, with regard to the originals, will be found in the remarks respectively annexed.

C A T O:

C A T O:

OR, AN

ESSAY ON OLD-AGE.

To TITUS POMPONIUS ATTICUS:.

“*A*H! could my numbers charm thy an-
xious breast,
And lull the sorrows of thy soul to rest;
Would’st thou not deem the poet’s lenient lay,
More worth than sums of countless gold
could pay?”

For well may I address you, my
friend, in those lines of the honest bard,

“Far less for wealth than probity renown’d,”

VOL. I.

B

with

with which he opens his poem inscribed to Flamininus². I am sensible at the same time that when the poet adds,

“ *Each rising sun beholds thy ceaseless grief,*

“ *And night returning brings thee no relief,*”

he holds a language by no means applicable to you. I perfectly well know the moderation and equanimity you possess; and that you have derived from Athens, not only an honourable addition to your name, but that calm and philosophic spirit which so peculiarly distinguishes your character³. Nevertheless, I have reason to believe that the present unpleasing posture of public affairs, sometimes interrupts *your* tranquillity of mind; as it frequently, I confess, discomposes my own⁴. But it is not my present purpose to offer you any consolation upon that subject: the case requires a very powerful application; and

I will

I will reserve what I have to say upon it to some future opportunity. My design at this time is only to communicate to you a few reflections concerning old-age: the infirmities whereof we are now beginning to feel, or at least are advancing fast towards them^a: and I am desirous of rendering the burthen as easy as possible both to you and to myself. I am well convinced indeed that as you have hitherto borne its weight, so you will continue to support its increasing pressure, with the same good sense and composure of mind which you have so happily discovered upon every other important occasion. However, having resolved to publish some re-

^a The friendship between Cicero and Atticus having commenced at school, they were nearly of the same age; both of them at this time being about the grand climacteric.

Vid. Corn. Nep. in. vit. At.

lections upon the subject, I determined to address them to you, who have a peculiar claim to this pledge of my affection: and it is a present to which we may both of us have recourse with equal advantage. For myself, at least, the considerations I now lay before you have had so happy an effect on my own mind, as not only to reconcile me to all the inconveniencies of old-age, but to render it even an agreeable state to me.

Can we sufficiently then express our sense of the obligations we owe to Philosophy, who thus instructs her disciples how to pass through every successive period of human life, with equal satisfaction and complacency? The advantages to be derived from her precepts, in other important situations, is a topic upon which I have frequently had occasion to expatiate; and shall often
perhaps

perhaps resume : but in the papers I now send you, my purpose is to consider those advantages with respect *only* to our declining years. To have put these reflections into the mouth of an imaginary character, like the Tithonus of Aristo^s, would have made but little impression upon the reader : in order therefore to give them the greater force, I have represented them as delivered by the venerable Cato⁶. To this end I have introduced Scipio and Lælius⁷, as expressing to him their admiration of the wonderful ease with which he supported his old-age : and this gives him occasion to enter into a full explanation of his ideas upon the subject. If you should think that he discovers, in this conversation, a richer vein of literature than appears in his own compositions ; you must impute it to the acquaintance he afterwards made with the Greek authors, whose language and

philosophy, it is well known, he passionately studied in the latter end of his long life. I have only to add, that in delivering the sentiments of Cato, I desire to be understood as fully declaring my own.

SCIPIO.

S C I P I O.

I HAVE frequently, Cato, joined with our friend Lælius, in admiring that consummate wisdom and virtue, which upon all occasions so eminently distinguishes your character; but particularly, in that singular ease and cheerfulness with which you seem to bear up under those years, which are pressing upon you. I could never observe that they are attended with the least inconveniency to you: whereas the generality of men, at your time of life, usually complain of old-age as the heaviest and most insupportable of burthens.

B 4 C A T O.

C A T O.

There is nothing, my friends, in the circumstance you have remarked, that can justly, I think, deserve your admiration. Those indeed who have no *internal* resource of happiness, will find themselves uneasy in every stage of human life: but to Him who is accustomed to derive all his felicity from within himself; no state will appear as a real evil, into which he is conducted by the common and regular course of nature. Now this is peculiarly the case with respect to old-age: Yet such is the inconsistency of human folly, that the very period which at a distance is every man's warmest wish to attain; no sooner arrives than it is equally the object of his lamentations. It is usual with men at this season of life to complain, that old-age has stolen upon them by surprise, and much sooner than they expected. But if they were deceived by their own false calculations,

calculations, must not the blame rest wholly on themselves? For, in the first place; old-age, surely, does not gain by swifter and more imperceptible steps on manhood, than manhood advances on youth: and in the next; in what respect would age have sitten less heavily upon them, had its progress been much slower; and, instead of making its visit at fourscore years, it had not reached them till four hundred? For the years that are elapsed, how numerous soever they may have been, can by no means console a weak and frivolous mind under the usual consequences of long life. If I have any claim therefore to that wisdom which you tell me, my friends, you have often admired in my character (and which I can only wish indeed were worthy of the opinion you entertain of it, and the appellation ^b the

^b *Cato's* proper name was Marcus Priscus; *Cato* being a characteristic addition affixed to it by common consent, from the old Latin term *Catus*, which signifies *wise*. *Plut. in vit. Caton. M.*

world has conferred upon me) it consists wholly in this, That I follow nature as the surest guide, and resign myself, with an implicit obedience, to all her sacred ordinances^s. Now it cannot be supposed that nature, after having wisely distributed to all the preceding periods of life their peculiar and proper enjoyments; should have neglected, like an indolent poet, the last act of the human drama, and left it destitute of suitable advantages. Nevertheless, it was impossible but that in the life of man, as in the fruits of the earth, there should be a certain point of maturity, beyond which the marks of decay must necessarily appear: and to this unavoidable condition of his present being, every wise and good man will submit with a contented and chearful acquiescence. For to entertain desires repugnant to the universal law of our existence; what is it, my friends, but to wage war, like the
impious

impious giants, with the Gods themselves?

LÆLIUS.

You will confer then a very acceptable service on both of us, Cato (for I will venture to answer for my friend Scipio as well as for myself) if you will mark out to us, by what means we may most effectually be enabled to support the load of incumbent years. For although we are at present far distant from old-age; we have reason however to expect, at least to hope, that it is a period we shall live to attain.

CATO.

Most willingly, Lælius, I yield to your request; especially as you assure me, that my compliance will be equally agreeable to both of you.

SCIPIO.

S C I P I O.

Yes, my venerable friend ; like travellers who mean to take the same long journey you have gone before us, we should be glad (if it be not imposing too much trouble upon you) that you would give us some account of the advanced stage at which you are now arrived.

C A T O.

I am ready, Scipio, to the best of my power, to give you the information you desire.—And indeed I am the more qualified for the task you assign me, as I have always (agreeably to the old proverb) associated much with men of my own years. This has given me frequent opportunities of being acquainted with their grievances : and I particularly remember to have often heard Caius Salinator, and Spurius Albinus⁹
(men

(men of consular rank and nearly of the same age as myself) bewail their condition. The principal subject of their complaint was, in the first place, that they were no longer capable of enjoying the sensual gratifications ; without which, in their estimation, life was of no value : and in the next, that they found themselves neglected by those who had formerly paid their court to them with the greatest attention. But they imputed their grievances, I think, to a wrong cause. For had they arisen merely from the circumstance of their age ; they would have been common to myself, and to every other man of the same advanced years. But the fact is much otherwise ; and I have known many, at that period of life, who passed their time without the least repining : who neither regretted that they were released from the dominion of their passions, nor had reason to think themselves treated with disrespect by any of their connections. In fact, the true grievance,

grievance, in all complaints of this kind, lies in the man and not in the age. They whose desires are properly regulated, and who have nothing morose or petulant in their temper and manners, will find old-age, to say the least of it, is a state very easily to be endured: whereas unsubdued passions, and a forward disposition, will equally embitter every season of human life.

L Æ L I U S.

Your observations, Cato, are undoubtedly just. Yet some, perhaps, may be apt to say, that your ample possessions, together with the power and influence of your rank and character, have very much contributed to soften the inconveniencies of old-age, and render it more than usually easy to you: but that these are advantages which cannot possibly fall to the lot of many.

C A T O.

C A T O.

I must acknowledge, that the circumstances you mention have some beneficial influence; but I can by no means admit, that the whole depends upon them. When a certain native of the paltry island of Seriphos¹⁰, told Themistocles, in an altercation which arose between them, that he was indebted for the lustre of his fame, not to the intrinsic splendor of his actions, but to the country in which he had the good fortune to be born; ‘it may be so,’ replied the Athenian general, ‘for if I
‘ had received my birth at Seriphos, I
‘ could have had no opportunity of producing my talents: but give me leave
‘ to tell you, that yours would never
‘ have made a figure though you had
‘ been born in Athens.’ The same sentiment is justly applicable to the case in question: for although it must be confessed that old-age, under the pressure
of

of extreme indigence, cannot possibly prove an easy state, not even to a wise and virtuous mind; yet without those essential qualities it must necessarily prove the reverse, although it should be accompanied with every external advantage. Believe me, my young friends, the best and surest guard against the inconveniencies of old-age, is to cultivate in each preceding period the principles of moral science, and uniformly to exercise those virtues it prescribes. The good seeds, which you shall thus have sown in the former seasons of life, will in the winter of your days be wonderfully productive of the noblest and most valuable fruit: valuable, not only as a possession which will remain with you even to your latest moments (though indeed that circumstance alone is a very considerable recommendation) but also as a conscious retrospect on a long life, marked with an uninterrupted series of laudable and beneficent actions, affords a perpetual

perpetual source of the sweetest and most exquisite satisfaction.

When I was very young, I conceived as strong an affection for Quintus Maximus (the celebrated General who recovered Tarentum) as if we had been of equal years¹¹. There was a dignity in the deportment of this excellent old man, which was tempered with singular politeness and affability of manners: and time had wrought no sort of alteration in his amiable qualities. He was not, it is true, at a time of life which could properly be called infirm age, when I first began to cultivate his friendship; but he was certainly, however, advanced in years: for I was not born till the year before his first consulate¹². In his fourth, I served a very young man in the army he commanded at Capua: and five years afterwards I was his Quæstor at Tarentum. From that post I succeeded to the Edileship; and four years after, in the consulate of Tudi-

tanus and Cethegus, I was chosen Prætor. It was at this period that, by the advice and eloquence of my venerable friend, who was now become extremely old, the Cincian law concerning donatives was enacted¹³. This great man led our troops to battle in his old age, with as much spirit as if he had been in the prime and vigour of life: and when Hanibal, with all the gaiety of a youthful conqueror, was exulting in the success of his arms; he gave a check to his victories, by a cool and patient perseverance in avoiding a general engagement¹⁴. It is to this part of his judicious conduct, that those famous lines of my friend Ennius allude:

*" 'Twas his to save the state by wise delay,
" Regardless what the censuring world might say.
" Time proves the merit of the glorious deed,
" His fame still rising as the years succeed."*

How wonderful was the judgment he displayed, and the vigilance he exerted,

erted, in retaking the city of Tarentum ! I remember when Salinator¹⁵ (who, after having been driven by the besiegers from the city, retired to the citadel) was boasting to Maximus in my presence, that it was by his means he regained possession of the town : “ very true,” replied Maximus, with a smile ; “ for if *you* had not lost it, I certainly could never have recovered it.” Nor were his spirit and abilities more conspicuous as a foldier than a statesman. In his second consulship, when C. Flaminius¹⁶, in direct opposition to the authority of the Senate, was dividing among the foldiers the conquered lands in the provinces of Gaul and Picentia, he had the courage singly, and unsupported by his colleague Carvilius, to withstand, as far as it was possible, the popular measures of that factious tribune. And even when he was Augur, he had the honest boldness, upon a particular occasion, openly to declare that “ every omen ought to be considered as favourable

able or inauspicious, as the interest of the state determined ¹⁷."

But there is no trait among the many shining qualities which adorned this great man's character, that I observed with warmer admiration, than the fortitude with which he supported the death of his illustrious son ¹⁸. The funeral oration he pronounced upon that affecting occasion, is in every body's hands : and which of the philosophers, I will venture to ask, does not sink in our esteem, after the perusing of this admirable performance ¹⁹ ? The truth is, it was not solely in the conspicuous paths of the world, and when he was acting in the public view, that this excellent man was truly great ; he appeared still greater in the private and domestic scenes of life ²⁰. How pleasing and instructive was his conversation ! how profound his knowledge of antiquity ! how deep his skill in the laws and institutions concerning augury !

To which I may add, that he was better acquainted with Grecian literature than is usual for a Roman. His memory too was so remarkably faithful, that there was not a single event of any note that had happened in the wars, either with our neighbours in Italy or with the more distant nations, with which he was not perfectly well acquainted. In short, from my first connection with him, I as eagerly embraced every opportunity of enjoying his society, as if I had then presaged, what the event has verified, that after his death I should never again meet with so wise and informing a companion ²¹.

I have entered thus minutely into the character and conduct of Maximus, in order to convince you that it would be an affront to virtue to suppose, that old-age, to a man endowed with such principles and dispositions, could possibly have been a state of infelicity. It

must be acknowledged at the same time, that it is not in every one's power to be a Maximus or a Scipio; to enliven the gloom of declining years by the animating recollection of the towns he has taken, the battles he has won, and the triumphs that have honoured his successful arms. But it is not the great and splendid actions of the hero or the statesman alone, that lead to an easy and agreeable old age: that season of life may prove equally placid and serene to him who hath passed all his days in the silent and retired paths of elegant and learned leisure. Of this kind, we are told, was the old-age of Plato, who continued to employ himself with great satisfaction in his philosophical studies, till death put an end to them in his eighty-first year. Such too was that of Isocrates, who is said to have composed his famous discourse, intituled *Panathenaicus*^a, in the ninety-fourth year

^a This performance seems to have been intituled *Panathenaicus*, from the subject rather than from

year of his age: and his death did not happen till five years afterwards. His preceptor Leontinus Gorgias lived to complete his one hundred and seventh year; continuing his studies with undiminished spirit and application to his last moments. This celebrated veteran being asked, Why he did not put an end to such a tedious length of life? "Because," said he, "I find no reason to

from its being designed to be spoken at that anniversary festival instituted in honour of Minerva, called *Panathenaica*; as it principally turns on celebrating the merit of those patriotic Athenians, who were distinguished in the annals of that state, by having deserved well of their country. It appears to have been composed at a later period of life even than Cicero names; for the author himself declares, in this piece, that he was ninety-seven at the time he wrote it, and labouring also under a very weak state of health. But neither age nor infirmities had subdued the spirit and genius of this extraordinary veteran. Cicero, in his treatise inscribed the *Orator*, speaks of this piece as a composition remarkable for the artificial arrangement and harmony of its periods; and Valerius Maximus styles it a work *Ardentis Spiritus plenum*.

complain of old-age:" an answer truly noble, and altogether worthy of a philosopher! They whose conduct has not been governed by the principles of wisdom and virtue, are apt to impute to old-age those infirmities for which their former irregularities are alone accountable. Far different were the sentiments of Ennius, whom I just now had occasion to quote: he compares his declining years to those of a generous steed,

"Who victor oft in fam'd Olympia's fields,

"To sweet repose his age-worn members yields."

You are not too young, my friend, to remember the person of this veteran poet; for his death happened so late as the consulate of Cæpio and Philippus, which is not more than nineteen years ago. And let me observe by the way, notwithstanding I was at that time full sixty-five years of age, I spoke in defence of the Voconian law with great exertion

exertion of voice and vehemence of action²². But I was going to remark, that this venerable bard, who lived to seventy, bore up under age and indigence with such wonderful chearfulness and good humour, that one would almost have imagined he derived even a satisfaction from those circumstances which the generality of mankind look upon, of all others, as the most dispiriting and oppressive.

When I consider the several causes which are usually supposed to constitute the infelicity of old-age; they may be reduced, I think, under four general articles. It is alledged, that “it incapacitates a man for acting in the affairs of the world;” that “it produces great infirmities of body;” that “it disqualifies him for the enjoyment of the sensual gratifications;” and that “it brings him within the immediate verge of death.” Let us therefore, if you please, examine the force and validity

validity of each of these particular charges.

“Old-age,” it seems, “disqualifies us from taking an active part in the great scenes of business.” But in what scenes? let me ask: if in those which require the strength and vivacity of youth; I readily admit the charge. But are there no other; none which are peculiarly appropriated to the evening of life, and which, being executed by the powers of the mind, are perfectly consistent with a less vigorous state of body? Did Quintus Maximus, then, pass the latter end of his long life in total inactivity? Tell me, Scipio, was *your* father, and my son’s father-in-law²³, the excellent Lucius Paulus; were the Fabricii, the Curii, and the Coruncanii²⁴, utterly bereaved of all useful energy, when they supported the interests of the republic by the wisdom of their counsels, and the influence of their respectable authority? Appius Claudius

2

was

was not only old, but blind, when he remonstrated in the senate, with so much force and spirit, against concluding a peace with Pyrrhus; to which the majority of the members appeared strongly inclined²⁵. And upon this occasion it was that he broke forth into those animated expostulations, which Ennius has introduced into his poem:

*“ Shall folly now that honour’d council sway,
 “ Where sacred wisdom wont to point the way?”*

together with the rest of those spirited lines with which you are no doubt well acquainted. This celebrated harangue, which is still extant, Appius delivered seventeen years after his second consulate; between which and his first there was an interval of ten years: and prior to both, he had exercised the office of Censor. It is evident therefore that he must have been a very old man, at the time of the Pyrrhic war: and indeed the tradition received from our fore-
 fathers

fathers has always represented him as such.

It appears, therefore, that nothing can be more void of foundation than to assert, that old-age necessarily disqualifies a man for the great affairs of the world. As well might it be affirmed, that the pilot is totally useless and unengaged in the business of the ship, because while the rest of the crew are more actively employed in their respective departments, he sits quietly at the helm and directs its motions. If in the great scenes of business, an old man cannot perform a part which requires the force and energy of vigorous years; he can act however in a nobler and more important character. It is not by exertions of corporal strength and activity, that the momentous affairs of state are conducted; it is by cool deliberation, by prudent counsel, and by that authoritative influence which ever attends on public esteem: qualifications which are
so

so far from being impaired, that they are usually strengthened and improved, by increase of years. And in this opinion, my noble friends, I am persuaded I shall have your concurrence; unless, peradventure, you look upon me as an useless and idle member of the common-wealth, because after having regularly passed through the several gradations of military service, from the private foldier to the commander in chief, and been concerned in each of those capacities in a variety of engagements both by sea and land; I now no longer lead forth our armies to battle. But if I forbear to enter personally into the fatigues of war; I represent to the senate its most proper object, and point out in what manner the operations may best be carried on. In short, I am perpetually urging the expediency of declaring war against the Carthaginians, in order to anticipate them in those hostilities which they have long been meditating against us: as in truth
I shall

I shall never cease to be apprehensive of that common-wealth, till it shall no longer have any existence. And may the glory of extirpating that insidious state be reserved, Scipio, for your arms! that you may have the honour of accomplishing the great work, which your illustrious ancestor so happily begun²⁶! Thirty-three years have now elapsed since the death of that great man; but his virtues are still fresh on the minds of his fellow-citizens, and will be had in honourable remembrance throughout all generations²⁷. His death happened the year before I was elected Cenfor, and nine years after his second consulate²⁸: in which office he was chosen my colleague. But had the life of this excellent man been extended even through a whole century; can it be imagined that he would have considered the closing period of such honourable days, as a state to be regretted? For it was not agility in the robust and manly exercises, or skill
and

and prowess in the management of arms; it was his judgment, his counsel, and his authority alone, which he would then have had occasion to display. If abilities of this latter kind were not the peculiar attributes of old-age, our wise ancestors would not, surely, have distinguished the supreme council of the state by the appellation of *Senate*²⁹. The Lacedæmonians, for the same reason, give to the first magistrates in their common-wealth, the title of *Elders*: and in fact they are always chosen out of that class of men.

If you look into the history of foreign nations, you will find frequent instances of flourishing communities, which, after having been well-nigh ruined by the impetuous measures of young and unexperienced statesmen, have been restored to their former glory by the prudent administration of more discreet years. “Tell me” (says one
of

of the personages in that dramatic piece of Nævius³, called the *School*, addressing himself to a citizen of a certain republic) “tell me whence it happened, “that so considerable a state as yours “has thus suddenly fallen to decay?” The person questioned assigns several reasons; but the principal is, “that a “swarm of rash, unpractised, young “orators had unhappily broke forth “and taken the lead among them.” Temerity, indeed, is the usual characteristic of youth, as prudence is of old-age.

But it is farther urged, “that old-age impairs the memory.” This effect, I confess, it may probably have on those memories which were originally infirm, or whose native vigour has not been preserved by proper exercise. But is there any reason to suppose that Themistocles, who had so strong a memory, that he knew the name of every citizen in the common-wealth, lost this retentive

tive power as his years increased, and addressed Aristides, for instance, by the appellation of Lyfimachus? For my own part, I still perfectly well recollect the names, not only of all our principal citizens now living, but of their ancestors also: and I am so little apprehensive of injuring this faculty, (as is vulgarly believed) by the perusing of Sepulchral inscriptions; ³¹ that on the contrary, I find them of singular service in recalling to my mind those persons whom death hath long since removed from the world. In fact, I never yet heard of any veteran whose memory was so weakened by time, as to forget where he had concealed his treasure. The aged indeed seem to be at no loss in remembering whatever is the principal object of their attention: and few there are at that period of life who cannot readily call to mind what recognizances they have entered into, or with whom they have had any pecuniary transactions. Innumerable in-

stances of a strong memory in advanced years, might be produced from among our celebrated lawyers, pontiffs, augurs and philosophers: for the faculties of the mind will preserve their powers in old-age, unless they are suffered to lose their energy and become languid for want of due cultivation. And the truth of this observation may be confirmed, not only by those examples I have mentioned from the more active and splendid stations of the world, but from instances equally frequent to be met with in the paths of studious and retired life. Sophocles continued in extreme old-age to write tragedies. As he seemed to neglect his family affairs whilst he was wholly intent on his dramatic compositions; his sons instituted a suit against him in a court of judicature; suggesting that his understanding was impaired, and praying that he might be removed from the management of his estate: agreeably to a custom which prevails likewise in our own country,

try, where if a father of a family by imprudent conduct is ruining his fortunes, the magistrate commonly interposes and takes the administration out of his hands. It is said that when the old bard appeared in court upon this occasion, he desired that he might be permitted to read a play which he had lately finished, and which he then held in his hand: it was his *Oedipus in Colonos*.^c His request being granted; after he had finished the recital he appealed to the judges, whether they could discover in his performance any symptoms of an insane mind? and the result was, that the court unanimously dismissed the complainants petition. Did length of days weaken the powers of Homer, Hesiod, or Simonides; of

D 2 Stefichorus,

^c Sophocles had almost attained his hundredth year, when he composed this tragedy; in which the marks of decayed genius are so far from appearing, that it was deemed by the ancients an unrivalled master-piece of dramatic poetry. *Val. Max.* viii. 12.

Stesichorus, Isocrates, or Gorgias? Did old-age interrupt the studies of those first and most distinguished of the Greek philosophers, Pythagoras or Democritus, Plato or Xenocrates? or, to descend into later times; did grey hairs prove an obstacle to the philosophic pursuits of Zeno, Cleanthes, or that famous Stoic whom you may remember to have seen in Rome, the venerable Diogenes? on the contrary, did not each of these eminent persons persevere in their respective studies with unbroken spirit, to the last moment of their extended lives? ³²

But not to enter farther into the consideration of old-age, in respect to the nobler and more exalted application of the human faculties; I could name among my friends and neighbours in the country, several men far advanced in life, who employ themselves with so much industry and activity in the business of agriculture, that they never suffer

suffer any of the more important articles of their husbandry to be carried on, when they are not themselves present to supervise and direct the work. I will acknowledge at the same time, that these spirited labours of the persons I allude to, are not, perhaps, a matter of much wonder with regard to those objects of tillage which are sown and reaped within the year; as no man is so far advanced in age, as not to flatter himself that he may at least survive to enjoy the benefit of the next harvest. But those rural veterans I am speaking of, are occupied also in branches of husbandry, from which they are sure that they themselves cannot possibly live to derive the least advantage:

“The future shade for times unborn they raise,”

as my friend Cæcilius expresses it, in his play called “the youthful companions.”^d Agreeably to this generous principle,

D 3

^d A dramatic poet contemporary with Ennius, see rem. 2. p. 148.

principle, the oldest husbandman when he is ask'd "to what purpose he lays out his labours in the business of planting?" may well reply; "in obedience to the immortal Gods; by whose bountiful providence as I received these fields from my ancestors, so it is their will that I should deliver them down with improvement to posterity."

The poet's sentiment in the verse I just now repeated, is far more just than in those lines he afterwards adds,

*" Severe the doom that length of days impose !
 " To stand sad witness of unnumber'd woes.
 " Ah ! had old-age no other ills in store,
 " Too well might man its dire approach deplore :"*

for if long life may occasion our being the painful spectators of many calamities, which an earlier death would have concealed from our view ; it may equally afford us the satisfaction of seeing many
 happy

happy events, which could not otherwise have come within our notice: not to mention that disagreeable scenes will unavoidably occur to the young no less than to the old. But the observation of my dramatic friend is still more unwarrantable, when he farther declares, that,

*“ Of all the ills which drooping eld await,
 “ ’Tis sure the worst to stand the scorn, or hate,
 “ Of happier years.”*

Why should he suppose that old-age necessarily lays us open to a mortification of this kind? As men of good sense in the evening of life are generally fond of associating with the younger part of the world, and when they discover in them the marks of an amiable disposition, find a sort of alleviation of their infirmities in gaining their affection and esteem; so, on the other hand, well-inclined young men think themselves equally happy

to be conducted into the paths of knowledge and virtue, by the guidance and instruction of experienced age. For my own part at least, I have reason to believe that my company is not less acceptable to you, my youthful friends, than yours most assuredly is to me.

But to resume the particular point under consideration. — It appears that old-age is so far from being necessarily a state of languor and inactivity, that it generally continues to exert itself in that sort of occupation which was the favourite object of its pursuit in more vigorous years. I will add, that instances might be produced of men, who in this period of life have successfully applied themselves, even to the acquisition of some art or science, to which they were before intirely strangers. Thus Solon in one of his poems written when he was advanced in years, glories that “he learnt something every
“ day

“day he lived.”³³ And old as I myself am, it is but lately that I acquired a knowledge of the Greek language:³⁴ to which I applied with the more zeal and diligence, as I had long entertained an earnest desire of becoming acquainted with the writings and characters of those excellent men, to whose examples I have occasionally appealed in the course of our present conversation. Thus Socrates too in his old-age, learnt to play upon the lyre:³⁵ an art which the ancients did not deem unworthy of their application. If I have not followed the philosopher’s example in this instance, (which indeed I very much regret;) I have spared however, no pains to make myself master of the Greek language and learning.

The next imputation thrown upon old-age is, that “it impairs our strength:” and it must be acknowledged, the charge is not altogether without foundation. But for my own part, I no more regret the want of that vigour which I possessed

I possessed in my youth, than I lamented in my youth that I was not endowed with the force of a bull or an elephant. It is sufficient if we exert with spirit, upon every proper occasion, that degree of strength which still remains with us. Nothing can be more truly contemptible than a circumstance which is related, concerning the famous Milo of Croton. This man when he was become old, observing a set of Athletic combatants that were exercising themselves in the public circus; "alas!" said he, bursting into a flood of tears and stretching forth his arm, "alas! these muscles are "now totally relaxed and impotent!" Frivolous old man! it was not so much the debility of thy body, as the weakness of thy mind thou hadst reason to lament; as it was by the force of mere animal prowess, and not by those superior excellencies which truly enoble man, that thou hadst rendered thy name famous. Never, I am well persuaded, did a lamentation of this

2

unworthy

unworthy kind, escape the mouth of Coruncanius, or Ælius, or the late Publius Craffus:³⁶ men whose consummate abilities in the science of jurisprudence, were generously laid out for the common benefit of their fellow-citizens; and whose superior strength of understanding continued in all its force and vigour, to the conclusion of their numerous years.

It must be confessed however, that the powers of an orator (as his function cannot be successfully executed by the force of genius alone, but requires great exertion likewise both of voice and gesture) must necessarily become languid and enfeebled by age. Nevertheless, there is a certain sweetness of utterance which, I know not how, is not subject to be impaired by years: and this melody of voice, (old, as you see, I am) I may venture to say, I have not yet lost. There is indeed a species of calm and composed elocution

tion extremely graceful, and perfectly well adapted to advanced years : and I have frequently observed an eloquent old-man captivate the attention of his audience, by the charms of this soft and milder tone of delivery. But if age should render the orator unequal even to this less laborious application of his talents ; they may still be usefully exerted. They may be employed in forming young men of genius, (yourself, for instance, Scipio, or our friend Lælius,) to a nervous and manly eloquence. And can there be a more pleasing satisfaction to an old man, than to see himself surrounded by a circle of ingenuous youths ; and to conciliate by these laudable means, their well-merited esteem and affection ? It will not, I suppose, be denied, that old-age has at least a sufficient degree of strength remaining to train the rising generation, and instruct them in every duty to which they may hereafter be called : and there cannot, certainly, be a more important,

portant, or a more honourable occupation. Accordingly, I have always thought it a very considerable happiness to your relations Cneus and Publius Scipio, together with your two grand-fathers Lucius Æmilius and Publius Africanus, that they were usually accompanied by a train of young nobles, who attended them for the advantage of their instructions.* Indeed there is a satisfaction in communicating useful knowledge of every kind, which must render any man happy, how much soever time may have impaired the powers of his body, who employs the talents of his mind to so noble and beneficial a purpose.

But after all, this imbecility of body is more frequently occasioned by the irregularities of youth, than by the natural and unavoidable consequences of long life. A debauched and intemperate young man will undoubtedly, if he live,

* See the first remark on Lælius.

live, transmit weakness and infirmities to his latter days. The virtuous Cyrus, in the discourse which Xenophon relates he held when he lay on his death-bed, and which happened at a very late period of life, declares he had never perceived that his old-age had been attended with any sensible decay. I perfectly well remember Lucius Metellus, when I was a boy. Four years after his second consulate, he was chosen chief pontiff; and he presided two and twenty years in the sacred college. This venerable personage preserved such a florid old-age to his last moments, as to have no reason to lament the depredations of time.³⁷ If I were to mention myself as an instance of the same kind, it would be only taking an old man's allowed privilege. Homer, you know, represents Nestor, altho' his years had extended even to the third generation, as frequently boasting of his extraordinary prowess. And indeed he might well be

be indulged in the vanity of being the hero of his own true tale : for, as the poet sings,

“ Words sweet as honey from his lips distilled.” ³⁸

And let me remark by the way, that in order to pour forth this mellifluous and persuasive eloquence, great strength of body was by no means necessary : so much otherwise, that the celebrated general of the Grecian forces, never wishes for ten Ajaxes, but for ten such officers as Nestor, to be secure of soon laying the walls of Troy level with the ground. ³⁹

But I was going to observe, that I am now in my eighty-fourth year : and I wish I had reason to boast with Cyrus that I feel no sensible decay of strength. But although I do not possess it in the same degree as when I made my first campaign in the Carthagenian war, in the course of which I was advanced to
the

the rank of questor: or when, during my consulship, I commanded the army in Spain; or when four years afterwards I was military tribune at the battle of Thermopylæ; ⁴⁰ yet I can with truth, you see, affirm that old-age has not totally relaxed my nerves and subdued my native vigour. My strength has not yet been found to fail me, either in the senate or the assemblies of the people, when my country or my friends, my clients or my hosts, have had occasion to require my service. The truth is, I have never governed myself by the cautious maxim of that ancient proverb so frequently quoted, which says “you must be old soon, if you would be old long:” on the contrary, I would rather abate some years from that season of my life, than prematurely anticipate its arrival. In consequence of this principle, I have hitherto been always open to access, whenever any person desired to be introduced to me for my advice or assistance in his affairs.

But

But you will tell me perhaps, that my strength is much inferior to yours. Undoubtedly it is ; and so is yours, to that of Pontius the Athletic centurion *f* : but is he *therefore* a more valuable man ? A moderate degree of force is sufficient for all the rational purposes of life : and whoever will not attempt to exert his particular portion farther than he is well able, will assuredly have no great cause to regret that he is not endued with a more considerable share. Milo is said to have walked the full length of the course at the Olympic games, bearing the whole enormous weight of an ox upon his shoulders. Now tell me, which would you choose to possess ; this man's extraordinary powers of body, or the sublime genius of Pythagoras ? In a word, my friends, make a good use of your

f An Officer in the Roman legions who had the command of a *company*, consisting of an hundred men.

youthful vigour so long as it remains ; but never let it cost you a sigh when age shall have withdrawn it from you : as reasonably indeed might youth regret the loss of infancy, or manhood the extinction of youth. Nature conducts us, by a regular and insensible progression, through the different seasons of human life ; to each of which, she has annexed its proper and distinguishing characteristic. As imbecility is the attribute of infancy, ardour of youth, and gravity of manhood ; so declining age has its essential properties, which gradually disclose themselves as years increase.

I am persuaded, Scipio, I need not tell you what extraordinary things that ancient host of your ancestors, Masinissa⁴¹, is still capable of performing. You have heard, no doubt, that although he is at this time ninety years of age, he takes long journies, sometimes on foot and sometimes on horse-back, without
once

once relieving himself throughout the whole way, by alternately changing from the one mode of travelling to the other ; that he is so exceedingly hardy, that no severity of weather when he is abroad, can induce him to cover his head ; and that having preserved by these means a thin and active habit of body, he still retains sufficient strength and spirits for discharging in person the several functions of his royal station. I particularize these circumstances as a proof, that by temperance and exercise, a man may secure to his old-age no inconsiderable degree of his former spirit and activity.

If it must be acknowledged, that time will inevitably undermine the strength of man ; it must equally be acknowledged, that old-age is a season of life, in which great vigour is by no means required. Accordingly, by the laws and institutions of our country, we who are advanced to a certain age, are

excused from those offices which demand robust powers to discharge. Far from being compelled to undertake what is beyond our force, we are not called upon to exert our strength even to its full extent^s. If it be allowed, that there are numberless old men so totally worn out and decayed, as to be incapable of every kind of civil, or social duty; it must be confessed there are: but may not this debility have arisen from an original weakness of constitution? a misfortune by no means peculiar to old-age, but common to every period of human life. How great a valetudinarian was that son of Scipio Africanus, who adopted you for his heir! so great indeed, that he scarcely ever enjoyed a day of unin-

^s By the Roman law no man could be compelled to engage in the militia after fifty; nor any senator summoned to attend his duty in the senate after sixty years of age. *Lex à quinquagesimo anno militem non cogit; à sexagesimo senatorem non citat. Senec. de brevit. vit. cap. ult.*

interrupted

interrupted health. Had he been formed with a less delicate constitution, he would have shone forth a second luminary of the common-wealth: for with all the spirit and magnanimity of his illustrious father, he possessed a more improved and cultivated understanding⁴². What wonder then, if age is sometimes oppressed with those infirmities, from which youth, we see, is by no means secure!

As to those effects which are the necessary and natural evils attendant on long life; it imports us to counteract their progress by a constant and resolute opposition, and to combat the infirmities of old-age, as we would resist the approaches of a disease. To this end, we should be regularly attentive to the article of health; use moderate exercise; and neither eat, nor drink, more than is necessary for repairing our strength without oppressing the organs of diges-

tion. Nor is this all : the intellectual faculties must likewise be assisted by proper care, as well as those of the body. For the powers of the mind, like the flame in the lamp, will become languid and extinct by time, if not duly and regularly recruited. Indeed the mind and body equally thrive by a suitable exertion of their powers : with this difference, however, that bodily exercise ends in fatigue ; whereas the mind is never wearied by its activity. When Cæcilius therefore represents certain veterans, as “ fit subjects for the comic muse ;”^b he alludes only to those weak and credulous old doting mortals, whose infirmities of mind are not so much the natural effect of their years, as the

^b The humour of the ancient comedy generally turned upon some old man, who was exhibited throughout the piece as perpetually imposed upon by the cunning of an artful valet and intriguing courtesan :

——*Meretrice*,——*Davoque Chremeta*
Eludente senem.——Hor. Sat. i. 10.

consequence

consequence of suffering their faculties to lie dormant and unexerted in a slothful and spiritless inactivity. The fact, in short, is plainly this : as irregular indulgencies of the amorous passions, altho' a vice to which youth is in general more prone than age, is a vice, however, with which those young men alone are infected who are unrestrained by principles of virtue ; so that species of delirium which is called dotage, is not a common weakness incident to every old man in general, but to those only who have trifled away their frivolous days in idleness and folly. In support of this observation, I will instance the venerable Appius *i*. His family consisted of four sons who were arrived at the state of manhood, and five daughters, together with a numerous train of clients and dependents : yet, far advanced as he was in years, and totally deprived of his sight, he would not com-

i See rem. 25.

mit the management of this very considerable household to any other hands than his own. And he was abundantly equal to the important charge; having kept the spring and energy of his mind in constant action, nor suffered himself tamely to sink down under the weight of incumbent years. In consequence of this spirited conduct, he maintained a more than parental authority over his family: his commands were obeyed as so many imperial mandates. In fine, feared by his servants, revered by his children, and endeared to all, he exhibited in his house a striking specimen of that simplicity and good order, which so eminently distinguished the domestic œconomy of our forefathers. Age is truly respectable in the man who thus guards himself from becoming the property of others; vindicates his just rights; and maintains his proper authority to the last moments of his life.

As

As I love to see the fire of youth somewhat tempered with the gravity of age; so I am equally pleased when I observe the phlegm of age somewhat enlivened with the vivacity of youth: and whoever unites these two qualities in his character, may bear, indeed, the marks of years in his body, but will never discover the same traces in his mind. In pursuance of this maxim, I am now employed in adding a seventh book to my Antiquities; in collecting all the ancient records I can meet with that relate to my subject; in finishing a revival of the speeches I made in the several important causes in which I have been engaged; as also in drawing up some observations concerning the augural, pontifical and civil law⁴³. And in order to exercise my memory, I practise the advice of the Pythagorean philosophers, by recalling to my mind every night all that I have said, or done, or heard, the preceding day⁴⁴. These are the employments by
 which

which I keep the faculties of my understanding in play, and preserve them in due vigour: employments in which I have little reason surely to lament the want of mere animal strength. Nor are my occupations wholly confined to those of a sedentary nature: on the contrary, I not only assist my friends in the courts of judicature; but frequently too, uncalled upon, attend the senate, where I propose such measures for the consideration of that assembly, as I have previously weighed and duly matured in my own thoughts. And these I support, not indeed by strength of voice and power of lungs, but by the better force of reason and argument⁴⁵. But were I so worn down by age as to be incapable of exerting myself in the manner I have mentioned, yet one satisfaction nevertheless would still remain with me; the satisfaction of meditating on these subjects as I lay on my couch, and of performing in imagination what I could no longer execute
in

in reality. Thanks, however, to that regular and temperate course of life I have ever led, I am still capable of taking an active part in these public scenes of business. In fine, he who fills up every hour of his life in such kind of labours and pursuits as those I have mentioned, will insensibly slide into old-age without perceiving its arrival: and his powers, instead of being suddenly and prematurely extinguished, will gradually decline by the gentle and natural effect of accumulated years.

Let us now proceed to examine the third article of complaint against old-age, as “bereaving us,” it seems, “of the sensual gratifications.” Happy effect indeed! if it deliver us from those snares which allure youth into some of the worst vices to which that age is addicted. Suffer me upon this occasion, my excellent young friends, to acquaint you with the substance of a discourse

course which was held many years since by that illustrious philosopher Archytas, of Tarentum ⁴⁶ : as it was related to me when I was a young man in the army of Quintus Maximus, at the siege of that city. “ Nature,” said this illustrious sage, “ has not conferred on
“ mankind a more dangerous present
“ than those pleasures which attend the
“ sensual indulgencies ; as the passions
“ they excite are too apt to run away
“ with reason, in a lawless and unbri-
“ dled pursuit of their respective en-
“ joyments. It is in order to gratify
“ inclinations of this ensnaring kind,
“ that men are tempted to hold clan-
“ destine correspondence with the ene-
“ mies of the state, to subvert govern-
“ ments, and turn traitors to their
“ country. In short, there is no sort
“ of crimes that affect the public wel-
“ fare, to which an inordinate love of
“ the sensual pleasures may not directly
“ lead. And as to vices of a more pri-
“ vate tendency ; rapes, adulteries and
“ every

“ every other flagitious violation of the
 “ moral duties ; are they not perpe-
 “ trated solely from this single motive ?
 “ Reason, on the other hand,” continued
 Archytas, “ is the noblest gift which
 “ God, or nature, has bestowed on the
 “ sons of men. Now nothing is so
 “ great an enemy to that divine en-
 “ dowment, as the pleasures of sense.
 “ For neither temperance, nor any
 “ other of the more exalted virtues, can
 “ find a place in that breast, which is
 “ under the dominion of the volup-
 “ tuous passions. Imagine to your-
 “ self a man in the actual enjoyment of
 “ the highest gratification that his ani-
 “ mal nature is capable of receiving ;
 “ there can be no doubt that during his
 “ continuance in that state, it would
 “ be utterly impossible for him to exert
 “ any one power of his rational facul-
 “ ties.” From hence our philosopher
 inferred “ that the voluptuous enjoy-
 “ ments are attended with a quality of
 “ the most noxious and destructive kind ;
 “ since,

“ since, in proportion to their strength
“ and duration, they darken or extin-
“ guish every brighter faculty of the
“ human soul.”

Archytas expressed these sentiments in a conversation with Caius Pontius, father of that famous Samnite commander, who obtained a victory over the consuls Spurius Postumius and Titus Veturius, at the battle of Caudium ⁴⁷ : and it was related to me by our faithful ally, and my very worthy host, Nearchus of Tarentum. My friend assured me he received this account by tradition from his ancestors : and he added, that Plato was a party in this conversation. This circumstance is indeed by no means improbable ; as I find that philosopher visited Tarentum in the consulate of Lucius Camillus and Appius Claudius ^k.

^k They were consuls in the year of Rome 404, about 350 years before the commencement of the Christian æra.

The inference I mean to draw from the authority I have cited is, that if the principles of reason and virtue have not been sufficient to inspire us with a proper contempt for the sensual pleasures ; we have cause to hold ourselves much obliged to old-age at least, for weaning us from those appetites which it would ill become us to gratify. For the voluptuous passions are utter enemies to all the nobler faculties of the soul ; cast a mist, if I may so express it, before the eye of reason ; and hold no sort of commerce or communion with the manly virtues.

To illustrate the truth of this assertion by a particular instance ; I will mention a fact concerning Lucius Flamininus, who was brother to that brave commander Titus Flamininus. It was with much regret that seven years after he had been raised to the dignity of consul, I found myself under the necessity of expelling him from the senate :
but

but I thought his scandalous debaucheries ought not to pass without marks of public disgrace. This unworthy man when he commanded, during his consulship, our army in Gaul, was prevailed upon by his pathic at an entertainment, to put to death one of the prisoners who were in confinement for a capital offence : and this infamous act escaped with impunity during the time that his brother Titus was censor. But when I succeeded him in that office, neither myself nor my colleague Flaccus, could by any means be induced to think, that so wanton and flagitious an instance of abandoned cruelty and lewdness, ought to pass without severe and distinguished animadversion⁴⁸ ; especially as it reflected dishonour, not only on the base perpetrator himself, but in some measure too on the high office with which he was invested.

I have frequently heard from some of my friends who were much my seniors,
a tra-

a traditionary anecdote concerning Fabricius. They assured me, that in the early part of their lives they were told by certain very old men of their acquaintance, that when Fabricius was ambassador at the court of Pyrrhus, he expressed great astonishment at the account given him by Cineas, of a philosopher at Athens, (for a philosopher it seems, he stiled himself) who maintained, that the love of pleasure was universally the leading motive of all human actions⁴⁹. My informers added, that when Fabricius related this fact to M'Curius and Titus Coruncanius, they both joined in wishing that Pyrrhus and the whole Samnite nation might become converts to this extraordinary doctrine; as the people who were infected with such unmanly principles, could not fail, they thought, of proving an easy conquest to their enemies. M'Curius had been intimately connected with Publius Decius, who in his fourth consulate (which was five years before the for-

mer entered upon that office) gloriously sacrificed his life to the preservation of his country⁵⁰. This generous patriot was personally known likewise both to Fabricius and Coruncanius: and they were convinced by what they experienced in their own breasts, as well as from the illustrious example of Decius, that there is in certain actions a natural grace and beauty that captivate by their intrinsic charms; and which, with a noble contempt of what the world calls *pleasure*, every great and generous mind will ardently and invariably pursue.

I have dwelt the longer upon this article, in order to convince you, that the little relish which old-age leaves us for enjoyments of the sensual kind, is so far from being a just imputation on this period of life, that on the contrary it very considerably raises its value. If age render us incapable of taking an equal share in the flowing cups, and luxurious dishes of splendid tables;

it secures us too from their unhappy consequences : from painful indigestions, restless nights, and disordered reason. Accordingly, the divine Plato justly represents pleasure as the bait, by which vice ensnares and captivates her deluded votaries. But if this enticement cannot always be resisted ; if the palate must sometimes be indulged ; I do not scruple to say that an old man, although his years will guard him from excess, is by no means excluded from enjoying, in a moderate degree, the convivial gratifications. I remember frequently to have seen when I was a boy, that illustrious commander who obtained our first naval victory over the Carthaginians, the venerable Duilius, returning from evening entertainments of this festive kind, preceded by a considerable number of flambeaux and instruments of music. He seemed particularly fond of being distinguished by such a pompous and splendid train ; and indeed he is the first instance of a

man not invested with a public character, that ventured to appear with this sort of ostentatious parade: a privilege, however, which in consideration of his heroic atchievements, he might well be allowed to assume⁵¹.

But to pass from the practice of others, to my own: I will acknowledge, that I always took a singular satisfaction in frequenting the meetings of those little societies which are known by the name of *confraternities*, and which were first instituted when I was quæstor, on occasion of the statue of Cybele being received into our public worship⁵². At the return of these anniversary assemblies, I used to partake with my brethren of the society in their festive meals; never to excess indeed, but however with a certain freedom natural to the gay spirits which usually animate that period of life, and which gradually subside as more serious years advance. But the principal satisfaction

I received from these entertainments, arose much less from the pleasures of the palate, than from the opportunity they afforded me of enjoying the company and conversation of a very large circle of my friends. Agreeably to this way of thinking, our ancestors distinguished these kinds of amicable feasts by the name of *convivial* banquets; as being chiefly calculated for the more rational purposes of social and friendly intercourse: whereas the Greeks denominate them by a term expressive merely of *eating* and *drinking*; as if those two articles, which ought to be considered as the least and lowest objects of the meeting, were first and principal in their estimation¹. For my own part, I receive so much pleasure

¹ “ The Romans, who were always deemed a
 “ more sober people than the Greeks, whenever
 “ they indulged any excess of this kind, called it
 “ *græcari*, i. e. *græco more bibere*. The modern
 “ Greeks still drink to excess: their festivals sel-
 “ dom finish till the guests are unable to proceed.”
Guy's lett. on Greece. Vol. i. p. 141.

from those hours which are thus devoted to chearful discourse, that I love to prolong my meals, not only when the company is composed of men of my own years (few of which, indeed, are now remaining) but when it chiefly consists of such young persons as yourselves: and I acknowledge my obligations to old-age, for having increased my passion for the pleasures of conversation, at the same time that it has abated it for those which depend solely on the palate. I would not however, be thought so professed an enemy to the latter, as to deny that, within certain limits, they may very reasonably, perhaps, be indulged: and I declare, for the satisfaction of those who are unwilling to part with this kind of gratifications, that I do not find old-age is a disqualification for the enjoyment of them. On the contrary, I take delight in joining those social parties where, agreeably to a good old custom instituted by our ancestors, a president of the club is appointed;

pointed; and am much diverted to hear him deliver out his important edicts⁵³. I rejoice too in those moderate and refreshing cups which Socrates recommends in Xenophon's Banquet; and am well pleased with those artificial methods of cooling, or warming the wine, as the different seasons of the year invite. Even when I am in the country among my Sabine neighbours^m, I allow myself the same kind of indulgencies; as I every day add one to the number of their evening societies, which we generally lengthen out by a variety of amusing conversation, 'till the night is far advanced⁵⁴.

If it be farther objected, "that the pleasures of the senses are not so exquisite in old-age as in youth;" my answer is, that neither is the inclination towards them equally strong: and certain-

^m Cato's patrimonial estate was situated on the borders of the Sabines, whose country now makes part of the Pope's dominions.

ly there can be no loss, where there is no desire. Sophocles when he was become old, being asked if he engaged in amorous commerce with the fair sex? “Heaven forbid!” (replied the venerable bard) “and glad I am to have made my escape from the tyranny of so imperious a passion.” The truth is, to be deprived of enjoyments of this kind, may be an uneasy state, perhaps, to those who are stimulated by warm desires; but where the passion is sufficiently subdued and extinguished, the privation is more eligible than the fruition: if, indeed, one can properly be said to be *deprived* of a pleasure, who is utterly void of all inclination towards it. I maintain, therefore, that there is more satisfaction in being delivered from the dominion of this passion, than in its highest gratification.

If it must be admitted, that in the fine season of life the soul receives a stronger
and

and more exquisite impressi^on from the pleasures of the senses; it will also be admitted, in the first place, that these pleasures are in themselves but of little value; and in the next, that notwithstanding old-age cannot enjoy them in their utmost extent and perfection, yet it is not absolutely, however, excluded from them. If a spectator who sits in the first row of the theatre, enters more thoroughly into the beauties of Turpio's ^{ss} acting, than he who is placed in the remotest ranks; the latter, nevertheless, is not totally debarr'd from all share in the entertainment. In the same manner, if youth holds a less obstructed communication with the sensual gratifications, than the circumstances of age will admit; an old man, though not equally, perhaps, affected with delight, feels at least as quick a relish of them as is necessary to content his more subdued desires.

But

But whatever may be the condition of old-age with respect to the instances I have been examining; inestimable surely are its advantages if we contemplate it in another point of view: if we consider it as delivering us from the tyranny of lust and ambition; from the angry and contentious passions; from every inordinate and irrational desire: in a word, as teaching us to retire within ourselves, and look for happiness in our own bosoms. If to these moral benefits naturally resulting from length of days, be added that sweet food of the mind which is gathered in the fields of science; I know not any season of life that is passed more agreeably, than the learned leisure of a virtuous old-age.

It was thus, Scipio, that your father's intimate friend Caius Gallus employed himself, to the very last moments of his long life: and I saw him expire, I had almost said, in measuring the distances of the heavenly orbs, and determining

mining the dimensions of this our earth. How often has the sun risen upon his astronomical meditations ! how frequently has the night overtaken him in the same elevated studies ! And with what delight did he amuse himself in predicting to us, long before they happened, the several lunar and solar eclipses⁵⁶ ! Other ingenious applications of the mind there likewise are, though of a lighter nature indeed, which may greatly contribute to enliven and amuse the concluding scene of human life. Thus Nævius in composing his poem on the Carthaginian war ; and Plautus in writing his two last comediesⁿ, filled up the leisure of their latter days with wonderful complacency and satisfaction. I can affirm the same of our dramatic poet Livius, whom I remember to have seen in his old-age. For although the first play he brought upon the stage was in the consulate of Cento and Tuditanus, six years before I was born ; yet his death

ⁿ The *Cheat*, and the *Clown*.

did

did not happen 'till I was nearly arrived at manhood. To those venerable personages whom I have already named, I might add Licinius Craffus, celebrated for his consummate skill in the pontifical and civil laws of his country, as also Publius Scipio, who very lately you know was elected chief pontiff. These, together with every one of the rest whom I have mentioned, I saw in the last period of life pursuing their respective studies, with the utmost ardor and alacrity. But let me not forget to add to this memorable list the example of Marcus Cethegus, whom Ennius justly stiled the *soul of eloquence*, and whom I likewise saw in his old-age exercising even his oratorical talents with uncommon force and vivacity ⁵⁷.

Tell me now, can the gay amusements of the theatre, the splendid luxuries of the table, or the soft blandishments of a mistress, supply their votaries with enjoyments that may fairly stand in competition

petition with these calm delights of the intellectual pleasures? pleasures, which in a mind rightly formed, and properly cultivated, never fail to improve and gather strength with years. What Solon therefore declares in the verse I just now cited, that he “learnt something “in his old-age every day he lived,” is much to his honour: as, indeed, to be continually advancing in the paths of knowledge, is one of the most pleasing satisfactions of the human mind,

From the pleasures which attend a studious old-age, let us turn our view to those which at that season of life may be received from country-occupations: of which I profess myself a warm admirer. These are pleasures perfectly consistent with every degree of advanced years; as they approach the nearest of all others to those of the purely philosophical kind. They are derived from observing the nature and properties of this our earth; which
yields

yields a ready obedience to the cultivator's industry, and returns with interest whatever he deposits in her charge; if not always indeed with equal increase, yet always with some.

But the profit arising from this principle of fertility, is by no means, in my estimation, the most desirable circumstance of the farmer's labours: I am principally delighted with observing the power, and tracing the process, of nature in these her vegetable productions. Thus when the ground is sufficiently broken and prepared, the seeds-man disseminates the grain; which is afterwards harrowed into the bosom of the earth: by the vital warmth and moisture of which, it is gradually expanded and pushed forth into the green blade. This blade shoots up into a knotted stem, which is nourished and supported by the various fibres of the root. The stem terminates in the ear, wherein the grain is lodged in regular order, and defended from

from the depredations of the smaller birds by a number of little bearded spikes. And let me add, (for I take great pleasure in bringing you acquainted with every article that contributes to sooth and alleviate my bending years) that I am particularly entertained with marking the growth of the vine; and following it in its progress from the seed-plot to its perfect maturity. Not to enlarge on that wonderful power with which nature has endowed every species of the vegetable kingdom, of continuing their several kinds by their respective seeds, and which from the smallest grain, as the fig, or from little stones, as the vine, most amazingly swell into large trunks and branches; not to dwell, I say, on this method of generation common to all the various tribes of plants on the face of the earth; is it possible to observe the different modes of propagating the vine by suckers, by layers, by the root, or by slips, without being affected with the most pleasing admiration?

tion? This shrub, which by its form is a trailing plant, must necessarily creep upon the ground, unless it be supported. For this reason, nature has furnished it with little tendrils, which serve as a sort of claws to lay hold of whatever stands within its reach, in order to raise itself into a more erect posture. And here the art of the husbandman is required to check its luxuriant growth; to train the irregular and depending shoots; and to prevent them, by a judicious pruning, from running into wood. After the vines have undergone this autumnal dressing, they push forth in spring from the joints of the remaining branches, little buds, which are distinguished by the name of *gems*. From this gem the future grapes take their rise; which gradually increase in size by the nourishment they draw from the earth, in conjunction with the genial warmth of the sun. At their first appearance they are extremely bitter, but in process of time, and when duly matured, they acquire

quire a most sweet and delicious flavour. In the mean while, being covered and guarded by the leaves, they receive a moderate degree of heat without being too much exposed to the solar rays.

There cannot, surely, be a landscape more pleasing to the eye, as well as more profitable to the owner, than a plantation of this kind. It is not, however, as I have already declared, the utility resulting from this species of agriculture, with which I am principally charmed: the mere cultivation itself of this generous plant, and the observing of its nature and properties, abstracted from all considerations of emolument, afford me a most amusing occupation. In short, every circumstance that relates to the management of this useful shrub; the regular arrangement of the vine props; the forming of them into arcades; the pruning some of the branches, and fixing layers of others;

are employments in which I take much delight. To this I may add, the cutting of proper channels for supplying the plantation with water; the stirring of the earth round their roots, and the trenching of the ground; works which are in themselves extremely entertaining, and which greatly contribute at the same time to meliorate and fertilize the soil. As to the advantage of manure (an article which Hesiod has not taken the least notice of in his poem on husbandry) I have sufficiently explained my sentiments in the treatise I formerly published on the same subject⁵⁸. Homer however (who flourished, I am inclined to think, many ages before Hesiod) in that part of the *Odyssæy* where he represents Laertes as diverting his melancholy for the absence of Ulysses, by cultivating his little farm; particularly mentions the circumstance of his manuring it with compost⁵⁹.

But the amusement of farming is not
confined

confined to one species of agriculture alone; to the cultivation of vineyards or woodlands, of arable or meadow grounds: the orchard, the kitchen-garden, and the parterre, contribute also to diversify its pleasures; not to mention the feeding of cattle and the rearing of bees. And besides the entertainment which arises from planting, I may add the method of propagating trees by the means of ingrafting; an art which is one of the most ingenious improvements, I think, that ever was made in the business of horticulture°.

I might

° The philosophic Cowley entertained the same opinion of this powerful art, and has celebrated, in some of his best strains, the wonderful transformations it produces:

*We nowhere art do so triumphant see,
 As when it grafts, or buds, the tree.
 In other things we count it to excel,
 If it a docile scholar can appear
 To nature, and but imitate her well:
 It over-rules and is her master here.
 It imitates her master's power divine,
 And changes her sometimes, and sometimes does refine.*

I might proceed to point out many other pleasing articles of rural occupations, if I were not sensible that I have already been too prolix. But if the love I bear to this agreeable art, together with that talkative disposition which is incident to my time of life (for I would not appear so partial to old-age as to

*It does, like grace, the fallen tree restore
To its best state of paradise before.
Who would not joy to see his conquering hand
O'er all the vegetable world command?
And the wild giants of the wood receive
What law he's pleas'd to give?
He bids th' ill-natur'd crab produce
The gentler apple's winy juice;
The golden fruit, that worthy is
Of Galatea's purple kisses.
He does the savage haw-thorn teach
To bear the medlar and the pear;
He bids the rustic plum to rear
A noble trunk and be a peach.
Ev'n Daphne's coyness he does mock,
And weds the cherry to her stock,
Tho' she refus'd Apollo's suit:
Ev'n she, that chaste and virgin tree,
Now wonders at herself, to see
That she's a mother made, and blushes in her fruit.*

Ode on Gardening, Stan. 10.

vindicate it from all the infirmities with which it is charged)—if I have dwelt longer, I say, upon this subject than was necessary; I rely, my friends, on your indulgence for a pardon. Suffer me however to add, that Manius Curius, after having conquered the Samnites, the Sabines, and even Pyrrhus himself; passed the honourable remainder of his declining years in cultivating his farm. The villa in which he lived, is situated at no great distance from my own: and I can never behold it without reflecting, with the highest degree of admiration, both on the singular moderation of his mind, and the general simplicity of the age in which he flourished. Here it was, while sitting by his fire-side, that he nobly rejected a considerable quantity of gold which was offered to him on the part of the Samnites: and rejected it with this memorable saying; that “ he
 “ placed his glory, not in the abundance
 “ of his own wealth, but in commanding

“those among whom it abounded⁶⁰.”
Can it be doubted that a mind raised and ennobled by such just and generous sentiments, must render old-age a state full of complacency and satisfaction?

But not to wander from that scene of life in which I am myself more particularly concerned; let us return to our farmers. In those good days I am speaking of, the members of the senate, who were always men advanced in years, were called forth from their fields as often as the affairs of the state demanded their assistance. Thus Cincinnatus was following his plough, when notice was brought to him that he was created dictator. It was during his exercise of this high office that his master of the horse, Servilius Ahala, in consequence of the spirited orders he received from the dictator, seized upon Spurius Maelius and instantly put him to death, before he had time to execute his traiterous purpose of usurp-
ing

ing the reins of government⁶². Curius too, and all the rest of the venerable senators of that age, constantly resided at their villas. For which reason a particular officer was appointed (called a *courier*, from the nature of his employment) whose business it was to give them notice when there was a meeting of the senate.

Now tell me, my friends, could the old-age of these respectable patriots, who thus amused their latter years in cultivating their lands, be justly deemed a state of infelicity? In my opinion, indeed, no kind of occupation is more pregnant with happiness; not only as the business of husbandry is of singular utility to mankind in general, but as being attended also (to repeat what I have already observed) with peculiar and very considerable pleasures. I will add too, as a farther recommendation of rural employment (and I mention it in order to be restored to

the good graces of the voluptuous) that it supplies both the table and the altar with the greatest variety and abundance. Accordingly, the magazines of the skilful and industrious farmer are plentifully stored with wine and oil, with milk, cheese, and honey ; as his yards abound with poultry, and his fields with flocks and herds of kids, lambs, and porkets. The garden also furnishes him with an additional source of delicacies : in allusion to which the farmers pleasantly call a certain piece of ground allotted to that particular use, their *desert*. I must not omit, likewise, that in the intervals of their more important business, and in order to heighten the relish of the rest, the sports of the field claim a share in the variety of their amusements.

I might expatiate on the beauties of their verdant groves and meadows, on the charming landscape that their vineyards and their olive yards present to
view :

view : but to say all in one word, there cannot be a more pleasing, nor a more profitable scene, than that of a well-cultivated farm. Now old-age is so far from being an obstacle to enjoyments of this kind, that, on the contrary, it rather invites and allures us to the fruition of them. For where, let me ask, can a man in that last stage of life more easily find the comforts in winter of a warm sun, or a good fire? or the benefit in summer of cooling shades and refreshing streams?

In respect to the peculiar articles of rural diversions; let those of a more firm and vigorous age enjoy the robust sports which are suitable to that season of life: let them exert their manly strength and address in darting the javelin, or contending in the race; in wielding the bat, or throwing the ball; in riding, or in swimming; but let them, out of the abundance of their many other recreations, resign to us
old

old fellows the sedentary games of chance. Yet if they think proper even in these to reserve to themselves an exclusive right, I shall not controvert their claim: they are amusements by no means essential to a philosophic old-age.

The writings of Xenophon abound with a variety of the most useful observations; and I am persuaded it is altogether unnecessary to recommend them to your careful perusal. In his treatise intitled *oeconomics*, with what a flow of eloquence does he break forth in praise of agriculture! an art above all others, you will observe, which he deemed worthy of a monarch's attention. In view to this, he introduces Socrates informing his friend Critobulus, that when Lyfander of Lacedæmon, a man of great and eminent virtues⁶², was deputed by the confederate states to the court of Sardis with their respective presents to the younger Cyrus; that
great

great prince, no less distinguished by his genius than by the glory of his reign, received him in the most gracious manner: and, among other instances of affability, conducted him to an inclosure laid out with consummate skill and judgment. Lyfander, stricken with the height and regularity of the trees, the neatness of the walks and borders, together with the beauty and fragrance of the several shrubs and flowers; expressed great admiration not only at the industry, but the genius that was discovered in the scene he was surveying: upon which the prince assured him, that the whole was laid out by himself, and that many of the trees were even planted by his own hand. Lyfander, astonished at this declaration from the mouth of a monarch whom he beheld arrayed in all the splendor of Persian magnificence, replied with emotion, “ Oh! Cyrus, I am now convinced
“ that you are really as happy as report
“ has represented you; since your good
“ fortune

“fortune is no less eminent than your
“exalted virtues.”

The good fortune to which Lyfander alluded, is an article of felicity to which old-age is by no means an obstacle; as the pleasure resulting from every rational application of the intellectual faculties, but particularly from the study of husbandry, is consistent even with its latest period. Accordingly tradition informs us, that Valerius Corvus, who lived to the age of an hundred, spent the latter part of his long life in the cultivation and improvement of his farm. It is remarkable of this celebrated person, that no less than forty-six years intervened between his first and his last consulship; so that his career of honours was equal to that period which our ancestors marked out for the commencement of old-age *p*. But his felicity did

p When Servius Tullius classed the Roman people, he divided their ages into three periods; limiting childhood to the age of seventeen, youth to forty-six,

did not terminate with his retiring from public affairs : on the contrary, he was in one respect at least even happier in the latter part of his life, than when he filled the first offices of the state ; as his great age, at the same time that it exempted him from the fatigue of bearing an active part in the administration of the common-wealth, added weight and influence to his general credit and authority⁶³.

The crown and glory of grey hairs is, indeed, that kind of authority which thus arises from a respectable old-age. How considerable did this appear in those venerable personages, Cæcilius Metellus and Attilius Calatinus⁶⁴ ! You remember, no doubt, the singular and celebrated eulogy inscribed on the monument of the latter : that “ All nations agreed in esteeming him as the “ first of Romans.” The influence he maintained over his fellow-citizens,

fix, and old-age from thence to the end of life.—*Aul. Gel. x. 28.*

was

was certainly founded upon the most unquestionable claim, since his merit was thus universally acknowledged and admired. To the instances already mentioned, I might add our late chief pontiff Publius Craſſus, together with Marcus Lepidus ⁶⁵ who ſucceeded him in that dignity. And, if it were neceſſary, I might enlarge this illuſtrious liſt with the revered names of Paulus Æmilius, Scipio Africanus, and Fabius Maximus, the latter of whom I have already taken occaſion to mention with peculiar eſteem. Theſe were all of them men of ſuch approved and reſpected characters, that even their very nod alone carried with it irrefiſtible authority. In a word, that general deference which is ever paid to a wiſe and good old-man, eſpecially if his virtues have been dignified by the public honours of his country, affords a truer and more ſolid ſatisfaction than all the pleaſures which attend on the gay ſeaſon of life.

But let it be remembered, my noble friends, that when I speak thus advantageously of that portion of life we are now considering, I would be understood to mean only that respectable old-age which stands supported on the firm foundation of a well-spent youth. Agreeably to this principle, I once declared upon a public occasion, that “miserable indeed
 “ must that old man be, whose former
 “ life stood in need of an apology :” a sentiment which, I had the satisfaction to observe, was received by the whole audience with uncommon applause. It is not merely wrinkles and grey hairs, which can command that authoritative veneration of which I have been speaking : He alone shall taste this sweet fruit of revered age, whose former years have been distinguished by an uniform series of laudable and meritorious actions.

But besides those more important advantages I have already pointed out, as
 attending

attending an honourable old-age ; it may be farther observed, that there are certain customary deferences and attentions which, although they may be considered, perhaps, as common and insignificant ceremonials, are undoubtedly, however, very honourable marks of general respect. Observances of this kind are strictly practised in our own country ; as, indeed, they likewise are in every other, in proportion to its advancement in civilized and polished manners. It is said that Lysander, whom I just now took occasion to mention, used frequently to remark that Lacedæmon, of all the cities he knew, was the most eligible for an old man's residence : and it must be acknowledged, there is no place in the world where age is treated with so much civility and regard. Accordingly it is reported, that a certain Athenian far advanced in years coming into the theatre at Athens when it was extremely crowded, not one of his countrymen

trymen had the good manners to make room for him ; but when he approached that part of the theatre which was appropriated to the Lacedæmonian ambassadors, they every one of them rose up, and offered him a place among them. Repeated claps of applause immediately ensued from the whole assembly : upon which one of the spectators remarked, “ that the Athenians understood politeness much better than they practised it.”

There are many excellent rules established in the sacred college of which I am a member⁶⁶ ; one of these, as it relates to the particular circumstance immediately under consideration, I cannot forbear mentioning. Every augur delivers his opinion upon any question in debate, according to his seniority in point of years ; and he takes precedence of all the younger members, even altho’ they should be in the

highest degree his superiors in point of rank.

And now I will venture once more to ask, if there is a pleasure in any of the mere sensual gratifications, which can equal the satisfaction arising from these valuable privileges thus conferred on old-age? To which I will only add, that he who knows how to enjoy these honourable distinctions with suitable dignity to the conclusion of his days, may be considered as having supported his part on the great theatre of the world with uniform spirit and propriety; and not, like an unpractised player, to have disgracefully failed in the last finishing act of the drama.

I shall be told, perhaps, that if we look into the world, we shall find “petulance, moroseness, and even averseness itself, are infirmities which generally break out and discover themselves

“felves in old-age.” But the fact is, these moral diseases of the mind, are rather the constitutional imperfections of the man in whom they reside, than necessary defects inseparable from the wane of life. Indeed this peevishness of temper may, I will not say be justified, but certainly at least in some measure excused, from that suspicion which old men are too apt to entertain, of their being generally marked by the younger part of the world as objects of their scorn and derision. Add to this, that where the constitution is broken and worn out, the mind becomes the more sensible of every little offence, and is disposed to magnify unintentional slights into real and designed insults. But this captious and irritable disposition incident to this season of life, may be much softened and subdued in a mind actuated by the principles of good manners, and improved by liberal accomplishments. Examples of this kind must have occurred to every

man's experience of the world; as they are frequently exhibited also on the stage. What a striking contrast, for instance, between the two old men in Terence's play called the *Brothers*! Mitio is all mildness and good humour; whereas Demea, on the contrary, is represented as an absolute churl. The fact, in short, is plainly this; as it is not every kind of wine, so neither is it every sort of temper, that turns sour by age. But I must observe at the same time, there is a certain gravity of deportment extremely becoming in advanced years; and which, as in other virtues, when it preserves its proper bounds and does not degenerate into an acerbity of manners, I very much approve. As to *avarice*; it is inconceivable for what purpose that passion should find admittance into an old man's breast. For surely nothing can be more irrational and absurd, than to increase our provision for the road, the nearer we approach to our journey's end.

It

It remains only to consider the fourth and last imputation on that period of life at which I am arrived. "Old-age," it seems, "must necessarily be a state of much anxiety and disquietude, from the near approach of death." That the hour of dissolution cannot possibly be far distant from an old man, is most undoubtedly certain: but unhappy indeed must he be, if in so long a course of years he has yet to learn, that there is nothing in that circumstance which can reasonably alarm his fears. On the contrary, it is an event either utterly to be disregarded, if it extinguish the soul's existence: or much to be wished, if it convey her to some region where she shall continue to exist for ever. One of those two consequences must necessarily ensue the disunion of the soul and body: there is no other possible alternative. What then have I to fear, if after death I shall either not be miserable, or shall certainly be happy⁶⁷? But after all, is there any man, how young soever he

may be, who can be so weak as to promise himself, with confidence, that he shall live even till night? In fact, young people are more exposed to mortal accidents, than even the aged. They are also not only more liable to natural diseases; but, as they are generally attacked by them in a more violent manner, are obliged to obtain their cure, if they happen to recover, by a more painful course of medical operations. Hence it is that there are but few among mankind who arrive at old-age⁹: and this (to remark it by the way) will suggest a reason why the affairs of the world are no better conducted. For age brings along with it experience, discretion, and judgment; without which, no well

⁹ It appears by calculations formed on the bills of mortality, that out of an hundred persons born in the same week, there are not more than ten who reach forty-six years. But it is proper to add, that this computation is built on the havock that is made of the human species by being crowded together in large cities.

formed government could have been established, or can be maintained. But not to wander from the point under our present consideration: why should death be deemed an evil peculiarly impending on old-age, when daily experience proves, that it is common to every other period of human life? Of this truth, both you and I, Scipio, have a very severe conviction in our respective families: in yours, by the premature decease of your two brothers, who had given their friends a most promising earnest that their merit would one day raise them to the highest honours of the state: and in mine, by the loss of my truly excellent son⁶⁸.

It will be replied, perhaps, that “youth may at least entertain the
 “*hope* of enjoying many additional
 “years; whereas an old man cannot
 “rationally encourage so pleasing an
 “expectation.” But is it not a mark of extreme weakness, to rely upon pre-

carious contingences, and to consider an event as absolutely to take place, which is altogether doubtful and uncertain? But admitting that the young may indulge this expectation with the highest reason; still the advantage evidently lies on the side of the old: as the latter is already in possession of that length of life, which the former can only *hope* to attain. “*Length of life,*” did I say? good Gods! what is there in the utmost extent of human duration, that can properly be called *long*; even if our days should prove as numerous as those of Arganthonius, the king of the Tartessi; who reigned, as history tells us, eighty years, and lived to the age of an hundred and twenty⁶⁹! In my own opinion indeed, no portion of time can justly be deemed long, that will necessarily have an end; since the longest, when once it is elapsed, leaves not a trace behind, and nothing valuable remains with us but the conscious satisfaction of having employed it well.

Thus

Thus hours and days, months and years, glide imperceptibly away ; the past never to return ; the future involved in impenetrable obscurity ! But whatever the extent of our present duration may prove, a wise and good man ought to be contented with the allotted measure ; remembering that it is in life, as on the stage, where it is not necessary in order to be approved, that the actor's part should continue to the conclusion of the drama : it is sufficient, in whatever scene he shall make his final exit, that he supports the character assigned him with deserved applause. The truth is, a small portion of time is abundantly adequate to the purposes of honour and virtue. But should our years continue to be multiplied ; a wise man will no more lament his entrance into old-age, than the husbandman regrets, when the bloom and fragrancy of the spring is passed away, that summer or autumn is arrived. Youth is the vernal season of life ; and the *blof-*
soms

soms it then puts forth, are indications of those future fruits which are to be gathered in the succeeding periods. Now the proper *fruit* to be gathered in the winter of our days, is, as I have repeatedly observed, to be able to look back with self-approving satisfaction on the *happy* and *abundant* produce of more active years.

But to resume the principal point we were discussing — Every event agreeable to the course of nature, ought to be looked upon as a real *good*: and surely none can be more *natural* than for an old man to die. It is true, youth likewise stands exposed to the same dissolution: but it is a dissolution contrary to nature's evident intentions, and in direct opposition to her strongest efforts. In the latter instance; the privation of life may be resembled to a fire forcibly extinguished by a deluge of water; in the former, to a fire spontaneously and gradually going out from
a total

a total consumption of its fuel. Or, to have recourse to another illustration; as fruit before it is ripe cannot, without some degree of force, be separated from the stalk, but drops of itself when perfectly mature; so the disunion of the soul and body is effected in the young by dint of violence, but is wrought in the old by a mere fullness and completion of years. This ripeness for death I perceive in myself, with much satisfaction: and I look forward to my dissolution as to a secure haven, where I shall at length find a happy repose from the fatigues of a long voyage.

Every stage of human life, except the last, is marked out by certain and defined limits; old-age alone has no precise and determinate boundary'. It may well therefore be sustained to any period, how far soever it may be ex-

' See note, page 92.

tended,

tended, provided a man is capable of performing those offices which are suited to this season of life, and preserves at the same time a perfect indifference with respect to its continuance. Old-age under these circumstances and with these sentiments, may be animated with more courage and fortitude than is usually found even in the prime of life. Accordingly Solon, it is said, being questioned by the tyrant Pisistratus, what it was that inspired him with the boldness to oppose his measures? bravely replied, “my old-age”⁹. Nevertheless, the most desirable manner of yielding up our lives is, when Nature herself, while our understanding and our other senses^s still remain unimpaired, thinks proper to destroy the work of her own hand: as the artist who constructed the machine, is best

^s The Stoics considered the understanding as in the number of the senses. *Vid. Acad. Quæst. iv. 10.*

qualified

qualified to take it to pieces. In short, an old man should neither be anxious to preserve the small portion of life which remains to him; nor forward to resign it without a just cause. It was one of the prohibitions of Pythagoras “not
 “to quit our post of life without being
 “authorized by the commander who
 “placed us in it:” that is, not without the permission of the Supreme Being⁷¹.

The Epitaph which the wise Solon ordered to be inscribed on his monument, expresses his wish that his death might not pass undistinguished by the sorrowful exclamations of his surviving friends. It was natural, I confess, to desire to be remembered with regret by those with whom he had been intimately and tenderly connected; yet I am inclined to give the preference to the sentiment of Ennius, in those famous lines,

*“Nor loud lament, nor silent tear deplore
 “The fate of Ennius when he breathes no more.”*

In the poet's estimation, death, which opens the way to immortality, is by no means a subject of reasonable lamentation. The act of dying may indeed be attended with a sense of pain ; but a pain however which cannot be of long continuance ; especially to a man greatly advanced in years. And as to the consequence of death ; it must either be a state of total insensibility, or of sensations much to be desired. This is a truth upon which we ought continually to meditate from our earliest youth, if we would be impressed with a just and firm contempt of death ; as without this impression, it is impossible to enjoy tranquillity. For as death is a change which, sooner or later, perhaps even this very moment, we must inevitably undergo ; is it possible that he who lives in the perpetual dread of an event with which he is every instant threatened, should know the satisfaction of possessing an undisturbed repose and serenity of mind ?

When

When I reflect on the conduct of Junius Brutus, who lost his life in the support of the liberties of his country; on the two Decii, who rushed to certain death from the same patriotic principle⁷²; on Marcus Attilius, who delivered himself up to the torture of a most cruel execution, that he might not forfeit his word of honour which he had pledged to the enemy⁷³; on the two Scipios, who, if it had been possible, would willingly have formed a rampart with their own bodies against the invasion of the Carthaginians⁷⁴; on Lucius Paullus, your illustrious grandfather, who by his heroic death expiated the ignominy we sustained by the temerity of his colleague, at the battle of Cannæ⁷⁵; on Marcus Marcellus, whose magnanimity was so universally respected, that even the most cruel of our enemies would not suffer his dead body to be deprived of funeral honours⁷⁶: when I reflect, I say, not only on the generous contempt of life which these heroic

heroic personages exhibited, but that whole legions of our troops (particular instances of which I have produced in my treatise on Roman Antiquities) have frequently marched with undaunted courage and even alacrity, to attacks, from which they were well persuaded not one of them could live to return ; it should seem there is little occasion to enlarge upon the contempt of death. For if the very common soldiers of our armies, who are frequently raw illiterate young peasants, are thus capable of despising its imaginary terrors ; shall old-age, with all the superior advantages of reason and philosophy, tremble at the thoughts of its near approach ?

The distaste with which, in passing through the several stages of our present being, we leave behind us the respective enjoyments peculiar to each ; must necessarily, I should think, in the close of its latest period, render life itself no longer desirable. Infancy and youth,
manhood

manhood and old-age, have each of them their peculiar and appropriated pursuits. But does youth regret the toys of infancy, or manhood lament that it has no longer a taste for the amusements of youth? The season of manhood has also its suitable objects, that are exchanged for others in old-age: and these too, like all the preceding, become languid and insipid in their turn'. Now when this state of absolute

* Cicero derives consolation to his reader from this disgust which attends even the proper and reasonable pursuits of man, as he advances from one period to another of his present being. Mr. Pope in his ethic epistles has placed this changeful disposition in human nature, in a more mortifying point of view; and no less agreeably to truth, than to the satiric genius of his muse, has represented the successive variations in those objects which engage the passions of the generality of mankind, as no better than a change of play-things from the cradle to the grave:

*Behold the child, by nature's kindly law,
Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw.
Some livelier play-thing gives his youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite.*

absolute satiety is at length arrived; when we have enjoyed the satisfactions peculiar to old-age, till we have no longer any relish remaining for them; it is then that death may justly be considered as a mature and seasonable event.

And now, among the different sentiments of the philosophers concerning the consequence of our final dissolution, may I not venture to declare my own? and the rather, as the nearer death advances towards me, the more clearly I seem to discern its real nature.

I am well convinced then, that my dear departed friends, your two illustrious fathers, are so far from having ceased to live; that the state they now enjoy can alone with propriety be called

*Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage;
And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age:
Pleas'd with this bauble as with that before,
Till tir'd he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er.*

Essay on Man, xi. 275.

life.

life. The soul, during her confinement within this prison of the body, is doomed by fate to undergo a severe penance. For her native seat is in heaven; and it is with reluctance that she is forced down from those celestial mansions into these lower regions, where all is foreign and repugnant to her divine nature⁷⁷. But the Gods, I am persuaded, have thus widely disseminated immortal spirits, and clothed them with human bodies, that there might be a race of intelligent creatures, not only to have dominion over this our earth, but to contemplate the host of heaven, and imitate in their moral conduct the same beautiful order and uniformity, so conspicuous in those splendid orbs. This opinion I am induced to embrace, not only as agreeable to the best deductions of reason, but in just deference also to the authority of the noblest and most distinguished philosophers. Accordingly Pythagoras and his followers (who were formerly distinguished by the name of the

Italic Sect) firmly maintained, that the human soul is a detached part, or emanation, from the great universal soul of the world ⁷⁸. I am further confirmed in my belief of the soul's immortality, by the discourse which Socrates, whom the oracle of Apollo pronounced to be the wisest of men ⁷⁹, held upon this subject just before his death. In a word, when I consider the faculties with which the human mind is endued; its amazing celerity; its wonderful power in recollecting past events, and sagacity in discerning future; together with its numberless discoveries in the several arts and sciences, I feel a conscious conviction that this active, comprehensive principle, cannot possibly be of a mortal nature. And as this unceasing activity of the soul derives its energy from its own intrinsic and essential powers, without receiving it from any foreign, or external impulse; it necessarily follows (as it is absurd to suppose the soul would desert itself) that its activity must continue

tinue for ever. But farther; as the soul is evidently a simple, uncompounded substance, without any dissimilar parts or heterogeneous mixture; it cannot therefore be divided: consequently it cannot perish. I might add, that the facility and expedition with which youth are taught to acquire numberless very difficult arts, is a strong presumption that the soul possessed a considerable portion of knowledge, before it entered into the human form; and that what seems to be received from instruction, is, in fact, no other than a reminiscence, or recollection, of its former ideas. This at least is the opinion of Plato⁸⁰.

Xenophon, likewise, represents the elder Cyrus in his last moments, as expressing his belief of the soul's immortality in the following terms. "O!
 " my sons! do not imagine when death
 " shall have separated me from you,
 " that I shall cease to exist. You be-

“ held not my soul whilst I continued
“ amongst you ; yet you concluded that
“ I had one, from the actions you saw
“ me perform : infer the same when
“ you shall see me no more. If the
“ souls of departed worthies, did not
“ watch over and guard their surviving
“ fame ; the renown of their illustrious
“ actions would soon be worn out of
“ the memory of men ⁸¹. For my own
“ part, I never could be persuaded that
“ the soul could properly be said to
“ live whilst it remained in this mortal
“ body, or that it ceased to live when
“ death had dissolved the vital union.
“ I never could believe, either that it
“ became void of sense when it escaped
“ from its connection with senseless
“ matter, or that its intellectual powers
“ were not enlarged and improved when
“ it was discharged and refined from
“ all corporeal admixture. When death
“ has disunited the human frame, we
“ clearly see what becomes of its ma-
“ terial parts ; as they apparently re-
“ turn

“ turn to the several elements out of
 “ which they were originally compos-
 “ ed : but the soul continues to re-
 “ main invifible both when ſhe is pre-
 “ ſent in the body, and when ſhe de-
 “ parts out of it. Nothing ſo nearly
 “ reſembles death, as ſleep ; and no-
 “ thing ſo ſtrongly intimates the divini-
 “ ty of the ſoul, as what paſſes in the
 “ mind upon that occaſion ⁸². For the
 “ intellectual principle in man, during
 “ this ſtate of relaxation and freedom
 “ from external impreſſions, frequently
 “ looks forward into futurity, and diſ-
 “ cerns events ere time has yet brought
 “ them forth ⁸³ : a plain indication this,
 “ what the powers of the ſoul will
 “ hereafter be, when ſhe ſhall be de-
 “ livered from the reſtraints of her pre-
 “ ſent bondage. If I ſhould not there-
 “ fore be miſtaken in this my firm
 “ perſuaſion, you will have reaſon, my
 “ ſons, when death ſhall have removed
 “ me from your view, to revere me
 “ as a ſacred and celeftial ſpirit. But
 I 4 “ although

“ although the soul should perish with
“ the body, I recommend it to you,
“ nevertheless, to honour my memory
“ with a pious and inviolable regard,
“ in obedience to the immortal Gods :
“ by whose power and providence this
“ beautiful fabric of the universe
“ is sustained and governed.”—Such
were the sentiments of the dying
Cyrus : permit me now to express my
own.

Never, Scipio, can I believe that
your illustrious ancestors, together with
many other excellent personages whom
I need not particularly name, would
have so ardently endeavoured to merit
the honourable remembrance of poste-
rity, had they not been persuaded that
they had a real interest in the opi-
nion which future generations might
entertain concerning them. And do you
imagine, my noble friends (if I may be
indulged in an old man's privilege to
boast of himself) do you imagine I
would

would have undergone those labours I have sustained both in my civil and military employments, if I had supposed that the conscious satisfaction I received from the glory of my actions, was to terminate with my present existence? If such had been my persuasion, would it not have been far better and more rational, to have passed my days in an undisturbed and indolent repose, without labour and without contention⁸⁴? But my mind, by I know not what secret impulse, was ever raising its views into future ages; strongly persuaded that I should then only begin to *live*, when I ceased to exist in the present world. Indeed, if the soul were not naturally immortal; never, surely, would the desire of immortal glory be a passion which always exerts itself with the greatest force in the noblest and most exalted bosoms “.

Tell

“ “ One of the best springs of generous and worthy “ actions,” as a very elegant and ingenious moralist observes, “ is the having generous and worthy “ thoughts of ourselves. Whoever has a mean opi-
nion

Tell me, my friends, whence is it, that those men who have made the greatest advances in true wisdom and genuine philosophy, are observed to meet death with the most perfect equanimity; while the ignorant and unimproved part of our species, generally see its approach with the utmost discomposure and reluctance? Is it not because the more enlightened the mind is, and the farther it extends its view, the more clearly it dis-

“ nion of the dignity of his nature, will act in no
“ higher a rank than he has allotted himself in his own
“ estimation. If he considers his being as circumscri-
“ bed by the uncertain term of a few years, his de-
“ signs will be contracted into the same narrow span
“ he imagines is to bound his existence. How can he
“ exalt his thoughts to any thing great and noble,
“ who believes that after a short turn on the stage of
“ this world, he is to sink into oblivion, and to lose
“ his consciousness for ever? For this reason—there
“ is not a more improving exercise of the human
“ mind, than to be frequently reviewing its own great
“ privileges and endowments; nor a more effectual
“ means to awaken in us an ambition raised above
“ low objects and little pursuits, than to value our-
“ selves as heirs of eternity.”—*Spect.* N°. 210.

cerns

cerns in the hour of its dissolution (what narrow and vulgar souls are too short-sighted to discover) that it is taking its flight into some happier region?

For my own part, I feel myself transported with the most ardent impatience to join the society of my two departed friends, your illustrious fathers; whose characters I greatly respected and whose persons I sincerely loved. Nor is this my earnest desire, confined to those excellent persons alone with whom I was formerly connected; I ardently wish to visit also those celebrated worthies, of whose honourable conduct I have heard and read much, or whose virtues I have myself commemorated in some of my writings⁸⁵. To this glorious assembly I am speedily advancing: and I would not be turned back in my journey, even upon the assured condition that my youth, like that of Pelias, should again be restored⁸⁶. The sincere truth is, if some divinity would confer
upon

upon me a new grant of my life, and replace me once more in the cradle ; I would utterly and without the least hesitation, reject the offer : having well nigh finished my race, I have no inclination to return to the goal. For what has life to recommend it ? Or rather indeed to what evils does it not expose us ? But admit that its satisfactions are many ; yet surely there is a time when we have had a sufficient measure of its enjoyments, and may well depart contented with our share of the feast : for I mean not, in imitation of some very considerable philosophers, to represent the condition of human nature as a subject of just lamentation^{s7}. On the contrary, I am far from regretting that life was bestowed upon me ; as I have the satisfaction to think that I have employed it in such a manner, as not to have lived in vain. In short, I consider this world as a place which nature never designed for my permanent abode ; and I look upon my departure out of it, not as being driven
driven

driven from my habitation, but as leaving my inn.

O ! glorious day ! when I shall retire from this low and sordid scene, to associate with the divine assembly of departed spirits : and not with those only whom I just now mentioned, but with my dear Cato ; that best of sons and most valuable of men ! It was my sad fate to lay his body on the funeral pile⁸⁸, when by the course of nature I had reason to hope, he would have performed the same last office to mine. His soul, however, did not desert me, but still looked back upon me in its flight to those happy mansions, to which he was assured I should one day follow him. If I seemed to bear his death with fortitude ; it was by no means that I did not most sensibly feel the loss I had sustained : it was because I supported myself with the consoling reflection, that we could not long be separated⁸⁹.

Thus

Thus to think, and thus to act, has enabled me, Scipio, to bear up under a load of years with that ease and complacency which both you and Lælius have so frequently, it seems, 'remarked with admiration : as indeed it has rendered my old-age not only no inconvenient state to me, but even an agreeable one. And after all, should this my firm persuasion of the soul's immortality, prove to be a mere delusion ; it is at least a pleasing delusion,—and I will cherish it to my latest breath⁹⁰. I have the satisfaction in the mean time to be assured, that if death should utterly extinguish my existence, as some minute philosophers assert ; the groundless hope I entertained of an after-life in some better state, cannot expose me to the derision of these wonderful sages, when they and I shall be no more. In all events, and even admitting that our expectations of immortality are utterly vain ; there is a certain period, nevertheless, when death would be a consummation

summation most earnestly to be desired. For nature has appointed to the days of man, as to all things else, their proper limits, beyond which they are no longer of any value. In fine, old-age may be considered as the last scene in the great drama of life : and one would not, surely, wish to lengthen out his part till he sunk down fated with repetition, and exhausted with fatigue.

These, my noble friends, are the reflections I had to lay before you on the subject of old-age : a period to which, I hope, you will both of you in due time arrive, and prove by your own experience, the truth of what I have asserted to you on mine.

ESSAY ON OLD AGE.

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R E M A R K S

O N

C A T O:

O R, A N

ESSAY O N O L D - A G E.

VOL. I.

K

JUVAT INTEGROS ACCEDERE FONTEIS
ATQUE HAURIRE.

LUCRET.

R E M A R K S

O N

C A T O, &c.

(1) **T**ITUS POMPONIUS ATTICUS was descended from a family rather antient and honourable, than conspicuous by rank and dignities. But he ennobled it by his uncommon virtues : and there is not to be found, perhaps, in all the annals of history, a more memorable person than this celebrated Roman. For without any advantage of birth, or station ; without any uncommon superiority of genius ;

K 2

without

without ever having filled any office in the state, or taken even the smallest part in the political contentions of his country; his character stands distinguished amongst the most shining of his illustrious contemporaries. But altho' his fame hath been thus transmitted through a long succession of ages, unfullied by censure or suspicion; a late critic, of no inconsiderable note in the republic of letters, has had the singularity, shall it be called? or want of candour, to enter his protest in form against the validity of his well-established reputation. To endeavour to vindicate from groundless cavils, a character which hath so long been in possession of general esteem, may be thought an instance, perhaps, of unnecessary and too officious zeal: For “ the
“ most pleasing of all harmony” (as the eloquent Balzac ingeniously remarks) “ arises from the dissenting
“ voice of a single individual, when
“ mixed in the general concert of universal
“ versal

“verfal applause.” Nevertheless, it may be a matter of fome curiosity, to examine by what means and with what fuccefs, the Abbé St. Real has been able to difcover thofe fecret fpo-
ts in the character of Atticus, which had lain concealed from every eye but his own.

This prejudiced critic, whose literary merit, however, in other refpects, it would be great injuftice not to admire and acknowledge, has compofed an ingenious treatife in order to prove, that Atticus was “a man of more arti-
“fice than probity; governing himfelf
“in all his focial connections of every
“kind, by no higher a principle than
“the ungenerous refinements of an art-
“ful and felfifh policy.” To fupport this charge, it became neceffary to blaft the credit of a contemporary witnefs; whose testimony in favour of Atticus was never fufpected, ’till St. Real found it expedient for his purpofe, to

call it in question. Accordingly this writer pretends, that Cornelius Nepos is so little to be relied upon in the account he hath given of Atticus, that either thro' ignorance or insincerity, he hath related circumstances in the life of his friend, which are expressly contradicted by Cicero's letters. If this assertion could be maintained, it would undoubtedly very much weaken, if not entirely destroy, the authority of this historian : but the instances the French critic alledges in support of this accusation, are either produced from passages of very ambiguous import, or founded upon readings which the most judicious commentators have unanimously rejected. Thus the Roman biographer affirms that Atticus, *nullius res neque præs neque manceps factus est* : the meaning of which St. Real supposes to be, that “ Atticus was never engaged
“ in that sort of pecuniary commerce
“ which was carried on by the Roman
“ knights, in farming the public revenues.”

“venues.” This interpretation might very justly be disputed with him. But taking the words in the sense he chooses they should be understood ; the passage he produces in contradiction to them from Cicero’s letters, is by no means sufficient for the purpose. As it stands indeed in the critic’s quotation, it is full to his point : *Tu aliquid Publicanus pendis.* [ad At. xi. 15.] But Lambinus, Grævius, Gronovius, and the judicious Mongault, all agree in reading *Tu aliquid Publicanis pendis*: a reading that utterly destroys the pretended inconsistency of Cornelius Nepos with Cicero.

But St. Real, not contented with thus attempting to blast the credit of this author as an historian, endeavours to sink him still lower in the opinion of the reader, by representing him “as having been holden in no esteem by his contemporaries ; the only illustrious part of his life being,” it seems, “his

K 4

“ friend-

“friendship with Atticus.” As the ingenious critic rests this assertion singly upon his own unsupported authority ; it might be sufficient to reply, that he has no right to be credited till he can produce a less prejudiced witness. But the truth is, the assertion is not only without proof, but against the clearest and most express evidence. For it appears that Cornelius Nepos lived in high repute and intimacy, not only with Atticus, but Cicero ; with the latter of whom he was long engaged in a correspondence of letters, some fragments of which are still extant. A late French historian of Cicero’s life expresses some surprize, that as Nepos lived in this friendly intercourse with Cicero, the latter should not have taken the least notice of him in any of his writings : but his wonder would have ceased, if he had recollected a passage in the letters to Atticus, where Cicero expressly speaks of him as a man whose name would descend with honour to the latest

latest posterity. [vid. ad At. xvi. 5.] But it is not the Roman orator alone who has done justice to his character: other distinguished authors who flourished in the same age with Cornelius Nepos, or not long after, have also borne testimony to his merit. Catullus addressed his poems to him; Pliny the naturalist appeals to his authority in various parts of his works; and his nephew, the younger Pliny, mentions him as a credit to the country in which he was born.

Having thus endeavoured to restore this elegant historian to his just rank in the literary and moral world; I may venture to appeal to his evidence in favour of one of the most distinguished characters that ever dignified a private station. It was in a private station, indeed, that Atticus chose to pass his life; not because he was too indolent, but too honest, to take a part with his ambitious contemporaries in those unworthy contests

contests for place and power, in which they were universally engaged. His reputation and interest would easily have opened his way to the most important employments of the commonwealth: but he declined to solicit them; well persuaded that whatever benefit might accrue to himself from those dignities, it would be a hopeless attempt, in the distracted situation in which public affairs were then thrown, to exercise them with any advantage to his country.

But although Atticus, it is probable, saw too clearly into the designs of the principal leaders of both factions, to engage in the measures of either; yet he generously employed his credit and fortune in relieving the distresses of the partizans of each, as they had occasion, in their several turns, to take the benefit of his equal assistance. Thus, when after the battle of Modena, Anthony and his adherents were generally
looked

looked upon as irrecoverably ruined, and many of the friends of that chief had actually forsaken him ; Atticus had the singular courage to stand forth as the protector of his wife and family, and of several others among Anthony's persecuted followers. In pursuance of the same generous principle, he supplied Brutus with very considerable remittances, when that unsuccessful patriot found it no longer prudent to continue in Rome. And let it be here observed to the particular honour of Atticus, that while the rest of his degenerate countrymen were plundering the provinces abroad, or bartering their integrity at home, in order to procure a supply to their unbounded luxuries ; he preserved a constant resource for these his well-directed bounties, by the most regular and judicious œconomy. It is very remarkable, however, that when the affairs of those who were concerned in destroying Cæsar, were in a prosperous train, and a proposal was set on foot to raise a fund
for

for their support, by a general subscription among the Roman knights; Atticus refused to be present at any meeting for that purpose. It was his invariable maxim not to be engaged in any measures which had the appearance of being concerted by a faction; and he told the persons who applied to him on that occasion, that Brutus might freely command his purse, but that he would in no sort concur in forwarding the projected association. This indeed would have been to violate the wise neutrality he had hitherto religiously maintained, and in which it was his laudable resolution invariably to persevere. By this conduct he gave a pregnant proof to the world, that his bounty flowed from much too pure and enlarged a source to be diverted into the narrow and polluted channels of party-politics.

It was this spirit of universal philanthropy, together with the uncommon and irresistible influence of his conciliating

ciliating talents, that rendered him esteemed and beloved by men of the most opposite designs and dispositions. Thus, although he neither flattered the power, nor in any respect promoted the ambitious purposes of Cæsar or Pompey, Anthony or Brutus, Cicero or Clodius; yet he had the singular address to preserve without the least diminution the friendship of each, even at the time when the contrariety of their respective interests rendered them the most irreconcilable enemies to one another. But if it required very uncommon qualities to be able to maintain a firm place in the affections of contending chiefs, when their mutual animosities were raging with the utmost violence; it required still greater, perhaps, to reconcile rival geniuses, and prevent emulation from breaking out into enmity. This extraordinary effect, however, Atticus had powers to produce, with regard to the two noblest orators that ever figured in the Roman forum;

forum; Cicero and Hortensius. He stood between them as their common center of union; and while they were contending together for the glorious prize of eloquence, it was by his means that their mutual friendship never suffered the least abatement or interruption. In short, it appears to have been the generous pleasure and honourable purpose of his whole life,

— *to spread friendships and to cover heats.*

He has been accused nevertheless, and it is the very candid and judicious Monsr. Mongault who brings the accusation, of not having acted in the affair of Cicero's banishment with that warmth and sincerity which the latter had reason to expect. But Cornelius Nepos, who was a common friend to both, expressly declares the contrary; affirming that in all the misfortunes which attended Cicero, he gave him the most unquestionable marks of his zeal and fidelity.

Mongault

Mongault has grounded this charge upon some complaints which Cicero throws out against this his celebrated friend, in a letter written to him during his exile. But the ingenious objector should have remembered upon this occasion, a very just maxim which he himself has advanced in one of his notes ; where he observes, “ that the unfortunate are apt
“ to be suspicious of their friends ; and
“ frequently without reason.” That this maxim is peculiarly applicable to the present question, there is the strongest reasons to believe, both from the general conduct of Atticus, and the remarkably dejected and querulous state of mind which Cicero appears to have laboured under during his banishment.

It is indeed altogether incredible, that he who was the general protector of all in distress ; who never forgot a benefit, nor remembered an injury ; who neither courted the power, nor followed the prosperity of any man ; in a word,
that

that the humane, the generous, and the disinterested Atticus should have deserted the first and the warmest of his friends, at a time when he stood most in need of his good offices. The truth is, he was of all men the most punctual in acting up to the full extent of his obligations of every kind: and he had such an abhorrence of deceit, that he never uttered a falsehood himself, or could endure it in another. To these singular virtues of the heart, he added the more shining accomplishments of the mind. He possessed an excellent taste for the polite arts; spoke the Greek language, as well as his own, in its utmost purity and perfection; was perfectly well versed in the history and antiquities of his country; and was considered as one of the most elegant writers of the refined age in which he flourished. In fine, and to sum up his character in the words of an excellent judge of men, and who was himself a shining ornament of his age and
and

and country; “ Atticus appears,” says
Sir William Temple, “ to have been
“ one of the wisest and best of the Ro-
“ mans; learned without pretending;
“ good without affectation; bountiful
“ without design; a friend to all men
“ in misfortunes, a flatterer to no man
“ in power; a lover of mankind and be-
“ loved by them all. By these virtues
“ and dispositions, he passed safe and
“ untouched through all the flames
“ of civil dissensions, that ravaged his
“ country the greatest part of his life:
“ and though he never entered into any
“ public affairs, or particular factions
“ of the state, yet he was favoured,
“ honoured, and courted by them all,
“ from Sylla to Augustus.” Thus be-
loved and thus honoured he died in
the seventy-first year of his age; and,
agreeably to his own direction, was
conveyed in a private manner to the
tomb of his ancestors erected on the
Appian road. *St. Real* 11. p. 183.
Mongault advert. Tom. xi. p. 10. Aul.
VOL. I. L Gel.

Gel. xv. 28. *Plin. Ep.* v. 3. iv. 28.
Corn. Nep. in vit. At. Temple, i. p. 175.
fol. ed.

(2) Titus Quintius Flaminius flourished about the middle of the sixth century from the foundation of Rome, and was one of the most distinguished generals of the age in which he lived. The particular distress which gave occasion to the poem from whence these verses are quoted does not appear: perhaps it arose from the part Flaminius took in his brother's disgrace, mentioned in a subsequent note. See p. 214.

The author of this poem was Quintus Ennius, one of the earliest of the Roman poets, and the first who attempted the Epic. Although his works were extremely numerous, it is a few fragments of them only that have escaped the ravages of time. This is a loss the more to be regretted, as they appear to have been holden in the highest esteem by

by the most competent judges among his countrymen, not only of his own times, but of the subsequent and more refined ages. Lucretius taking notice of an opinion which Ennius adopted concerning the transmigration of the soul, and which he had wrought into one of his poems, breaks out into the following strains of applause :

*Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amœno
Detulit ex Helicone perenni frunde coronam,
Per genteis Italas hominum quæ clara clueret.*

And there were some critics, as appears from Horace, who did not scruple to place him in a rank inferior only to the immortal Homer. His genius recommended him to the notice of Cato, who having found him in Sardinia when he had the government of that province as prætor, took him under his protection and brought him to Rome : an act that did Cato not less honour, says the Roman historian of his life, than if he had derived from his administration of that

island the most splendid triumph. But the most unquestionable proof of our poet's genius is, that Virgil has deigned to transplant into his *Æneid*, several lines and even whole passages from the poems of this venerable bard. *Plut. in vit. Flam. Corn. Nep. in vit. Caton. Lucret. i. 113. Hor. Ep. ad Aug. x. 50. Macrob. Saturn. vi. 1.*

(3) The different factions of Sylla and Cinna having, about the year of Rome 666, occasioned great and dangerous commotions in the republic; Atticus finding, if he continued in Rome, it would be impossible, from his family connections, to stand neuter, withdrew to Athens; that *nobilissimum orbis Gymnasium*, as Cicero somewhere emphatically calls it, which was filled with students from every quarter of the civilized world. During his residence in that illustrious seminary of learning and the polite arts, he employed himself in cultivating his mind under those great
masters

masters with which that celebrated city so eminently abounded.

It does not appear upon what account he received the surname of *Atticus*. One of the commentators conjectures, that it took its rise from his speaking the Greek language, with all the correctness and propriety of a native Athenian: perhaps it was given to him as a designation of that singular elegance and politeness, which distinguished every part of his accomplished character. *Corn. Nep. in vit. At.*

(4) This alludes to the disordered state of the common-wealth, occasioned by Julius Cæsar's usurpation and the commotions consequent on his death; the present and following treatise having been written soon after he was assassinated in the senate. No man had more at stake in these public convulsions, than Cicero: and nothing sets the power of his mind in a more striking point

of view, than his being able, at such an alarming crisis, sufficiently to compose his thoughts to meditations of this kind. For not only the two pieces above-mentioned, but his dialogues on the *nature of the Gods*, together with those concerning *divination*, as also his book of *offices*, and some other of the most considerable of his philosophical writings, were drawn up within the same turbulent and distracted period.

(5) He was contemporary with Zeno, and one of the disciples of that celebrated founder of the Stoical sect. Aristo published several philosophical treatises; by which he acquired the reputation rather of an agreeable and elegant, than of a solid and judicious writer. And indeed, if one may be allowed to judge of the merit of his other performances, by the plan he adopted to convey his sentiments concerning old-age; it will give no very favourable idea of the manner in which they were conducted.

conducted. For Tithonus being altogether an imaginary character, which existed only in the regions of mythology; his history appears to have been ill suited to the subject it was designed to illustrate; as the only direct moral to be drawn from it, seems to have been, that “early rising is conducive to long life:” For the legend says, that Aurora having fallen in love with Tithonus, made him a present of immortality, but had not sufficient power at the same time to secure him from the usual consequences of longevity. It is evident, therefore, how much the Roman moralist had the advantage of the Grecian, in the manner of treating his subject. Cicero’s hero is a real personage, whose example and authority cannot but make a suitable impression upon the mind of the reader; as there is not a single sentiment, or circumstance, ascribed to Cato in the following essay, which is not perfectly consistent with

his true character, or expressly verified by authentic history.

(6) This celebrated person, who takes the lead in the following conversation, is Marcus Porcius Cato, usually stiled the cenfor ; from his having administered that most important as well as most honourable office in the Roman state, with a spirit and integrity that was never equalled perhaps by any of his successors. This extraordinary man possessed such a variety of powerful talents, and possessed them too in so eminent a degree, that in whatever country he had happened to have been born, says the Roman historian, his abilities must necessarily have raised him to the first dignities of the state. In the military department, he distinguished himself above his contemporaries both as a soldier and a general. In the paths of civil life, he appeared equally conspicuous : and he was universally acknowledged to be
the

the most learned lawyer, as well as the most eloquent orator, of the age in which he lived. In a word, to whatever art, or science, he applied his mind, he acquired so superior a skill in it, that it seemed as if his genius was formed to shine in that particular article of knowledge alone. To these wonderful powers of the understanding he united many great and amiable qualities of the heart. In private life he was a tender husband, a kind father, and a most exact œconomist. In his public character, he was a firm friend to the liberties of his country ; which upon all occasions he supported with a courage that no dangers could dismay, and with an integrity that no temptations could seduce. His strength of body was nothing inferior to the vigour of his mind ; as he gave many proofs during his military services, of his being able to sustain labour, and forego the most importunate demands of thirst and hunger, to a degree which has scarcely

scarcely any parallel in history : and old-age, which generally breaks the constitution, and exhausts the spirits of other men, seemed incapable of subduing Cato's. Truth, however, requires me to acknowledge, that there are spots in this great man's character, which one cannot but regret to discover amidst the brightness of those uncommon virtues with which they were surrounded. Some instances of this kind there will be occasion to produce, in the course of the following remarks. In the mean while, nothing more seems necessary to be added for the reader's information at present, but that he was born in the year of R. 521, being 233 years before the Christian æra, and died between the age of 80 and 90 ; authors not being agreed in what precise year within those two periods his death happened. *Liv.* xxxix. 40. *Plut.* and *Corn. Nep. in vit. Caton,*

(7) *Scipio*

(7) *Scipio* was the worthy son of the excellent *Paulus Æmilius*; but being adopted into the family of the first *Scipio Africanus*, he was distinguished by the appellation of *Scipio Æmilianus*. *Lælius* was a son of the famous friend of the first *Scipio Africanus*. A particular account will be given of both in the notes to the essay on Friendship, where a more proper occasion will offer to enter into their characters. At the time when the present discourse is supposed to have passed, they were each of them very young men, and had not as yet had any opportunity of displaying their virtues and their talents upon the great stage of the world. It will be sufficient therefore just to hint, in the expressive language of an elegant historian, *Hic erit Scipio qui in exitium Africæ crescit, nomen ex malis ejus habiturus.* Flor. II. 6. that he is the same *Scipio* who some years afterwards totally destroyed Carthage, and acquired the appellation *Africanus* from the ruin of that unfortunate city.

(8) To

(8) To “follow nature,” was the great and common principle upon which the whole system of ethics turned, as taught by the most approved and judicious philosophers of the different sects among the ancient moralists. By *nature* they meant the laws of its divine author as impressed in clear and legible characters, on the physical and moral world. *Quid enim aliud est Natura*, says Seneca, *quàm Deus & divina ratio toti mundo & partibus ejus inserta.* [De benef. iv. 7.] To “follow nature,” therefore, was, in the philosophical sense of the precept, to follow the dictates of *reason, truth, or virtue*: terms of synonymous import, and each of them comprehending the whole extent of man’s duty as a rational agent, whose chief and ultimate happiness depends, by the *constitution* of his being, on acting up to the highest possible perfection of his moral and intellectual powers. The present treatise is indeed the best and noblest comment upon the maxim
under

under consideration ; as it explains and exemplifies the full import of the rule, in the character and conduct of that venerable Roman who is represented as making it the governing principle of his illustrious life. The reader will see the truth of this observation abundantly verified in the progress of Cato's discourse ; where the honourable actions he recites and the just sentiments he discovers, are the genuine and proper consequences of pursuing that great and unerring guide whom he here professes to follow. It was this, in particular, that confirmed him in that animating persuasion which invigorated all his virtues, and softened the infirmities of his declining age ; the persuasion, I mean, which he so frequently and so strongly expresses, that " death (to those who act up to the principles above mentioned) is only an entrance into a state of pure and permanent felicity." *Laert. in vit. Zen. Lips. Manud. xi. 14. vid. Cic. de Fin. v. 9.*

(9) *Salinator*

(9) *Salinator* was consul A. U. 565. *Albinus* A. U. 567. and Cato A. U. 558.

(10) An inconsiderable Greek island, famous only for a singular species of frogs, which are said to have been totally mute. *Cellar. geog.*

(11) Quintus Fabius Maximus was descended from a very illustrious family, which had furnished the Roman republic, at different periods, with some of her most approved and distinguished patriots. The title *Maximus* was derived to him from one of his ancestors; but it was a title, however, which he himself justly merited from the unborrowed lustre of his own personal virtues: *vir certè fuit, says Livy, dignus tanto cognomine, vel si nomen ab eo inciperet.* He was the fifth time advanced to the dignity of consul in the Y. of R. 545: and it was in that year he recovered, from the garrison which Hannibal had placed in it, the city of Tarentum.

tum. This truly great man, amongst his other singular qualities, tempered the roughness of the martial virtues with the mildest and most gentle deportment; and he gave such early marks of this sweetness of disposition, that when he was a boy he was usually stiled, by his family and companions, the *lamb*. *Plut. in vit. Fab. Max.*

(12) He was chosen consul for the first time in the Y. of R. 521.

(13) “ So long as the Romans preserved their virtue uncorrupted, those who possessed the powers of oratory employed their talents in defence of their clients, without fee or reward; as Cicero remarks in his treatise *de Off.* xi. 19. It sometimes happened, however, from a principle of gratitude, that little presents were made from the parties to their patrons. These in process of time came to be demanded as a matter of right,
“ and

“ and were so excessive as to be more
“ than an equivalent for the service re-
“ ceived. *Cincius*, one of the tribunes
“ of the people, in order to correct this
“ abuse, proposed the law here men-
“ tioned : and he was supported in his
“ motion by Fabius Maximus.” *Du*
Bois in loc.

(14) In the Y. of R. 536. Fabius Maximus was created dictator. The intent of investing him with this high office was, for the more effectual carrying on the war against Hanibal, who was gaining great advantages over the Romans at the head of his victorious troops in Italy. These advantages having been owing to the rash and impetuous conduct of some of those generals, who had preceded Fabius in this important command ; that judicious chief was induced, both from the general coolness of his temper, and from the particular circumstances of the campaign, to act a more circumspective part,

part, by prudently avoiding a general engagement. This drew upon him much unjust censure, not only from his enemies at Rome, but from the soldiers of his army; both parties imputing his judicious conduct to a principle of cowardice. The noble answer he returned when these calumnies were reported to him, well deserves to be remembered. “I should be a coward indeed,” replied this brave and experienced captain, “if I were to be terrified into a change of measures by groundless clamours and reproaches. That man,” added he, “is unfit to be at the head of an army who is capable of being influenced by the calumnies, or caprice, of those whom he is appointed to command.” *Plut. in vit. Fab. Max.*

(15) He commanded in Tarentum when the troops of Hanibal gained possession of the town: upon which he retired to the citadel and gallantly

VOL. I.

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defended

defended it, 'till the city was retaken by Fabius. *Plut. ubi Sap.*

(16) He was tribune in the Y. of R. 525.

(17) Homer puts a sentiment of the same spirited kind into the mouth of Hector. That gallant prince, endeavouring to force the Grecian intrenchments, is exhorted by Polydamas to discontinue the attack, on occasion of an unfavourable omen which appears on the left side of the Trojan army. Hector treats both the advice and the adviser with much contempt; and among other sentiments equally just and animated, nobly replies, (as the lines are finely translated by Mr. Pope)

*Ye vagrants of the sky! your wings extend,
Or where the suns arise or where descend;
To right, to left, unheeded take your way———
“Without a sign his sword the brave man draws,
“And asks no omen but his country's cause.”*

Il. xii. 279.

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The circumstance mentioned in the text, justifies from the censure of M. Dacier a passage in Plutarch's life of Fabius Maximus ; in which, on occasion of certain prodigies that alarmed the republic, he is represented as having little faith in these supposed intimations of impending calamities. This the learned critic seems to think is an imputation upon his religious principles, by no means agreeable to his general character. It appears, however, that the Grecian biographer is better supported in his assertion, than his French translator imagined ; who probably would have withdrawn his censure, if he had recollected that in the instance in question Plutarch could have appealed to the testimony of Cicero. Indeed, there would have been no reason to doubt the authenticity of the fact, had it rested solely on the credit of Plutarch. For faith in divination, was by no means so universal an article of the Roman creed, as to be rejected

by none but those who maintained irreligious and immoral tenets. Their best and greatest men were much divided in opinion concerning the validity of those principles upon which this pretended science was founded: and although some of them seriously believed and defended the certainty of these kinds of predictions; others considered the whole art as the imposition of fraud, or at best, of state-policy, on vulgar superstition and credulity. In the number of the latter, not to mention other great names, was Cato the censor; who frequently expressed his “astonishment
 “how it was possible for one Aruspex
 “to keep the gravity of his countenance when he met another:” *mirari se aiebat quod non rideret Haruspex Haruspicem cum videret.* Cic. de Divin. xi. 24. *Dac. Trad. des vies de Plut. xi. p. 297. not. 21.*

(18) He was elected consul with T. Sempronius Gracchus in the Y. of R.

541, immediately after the fourth consulate of his father.

(19) The speech mentioned in the text, was extant in the days of Plutarch, and still read and admired as a perfect model and master-piece of Roman eloquence. And no wonder; for Cicero has given it the highest encomiums, not only in the present passage, but in another part of his writings in which he represents it as *insignem ingenii, judicii & ordinis præstantiâ*. Oratory indeed, was in the number of those arts to which Fabius diligently applied himself, as an essential qualification in a commonwealth constituted like the Roman. His style was perfectly well adapted to that solid and manly sense with which all his sentiments were impregnated; and is said to have very much resembled the close and concise diction of Thucydides. *Plut. in vit. Fab. Max.*

It was customary at the funerals of illustrious persons, for the nearest relation to speak an oration in honour of the deceased. This practice, as several of the Roman writers complain, tended very much to corrupt the truth of history; as these panegyrics, which frequently imputed virtues and actions to the object of them which never existed, were too often resorted to by historians as faithful documents and memoirs. *Cic. in Brut. Liv. viii. 40.*

(20) There is no quality in human nature, more rare and uncommon than *consistency*; as there are few, like this excellent Roman, whose conduct is all of a piece, and will bear examining in every point of view in which it can be placed. Many, perhaps, of those characters which the world calls *great*, would lose much of the esteem and applause they acquire while acting under the public inspection, if they were to be followed into their private scenes,
and

and observed in their domestic hours : for it is with the generality of men, as with pictures ; they must be placed at a certain distance from the spectator, in order to be seen with advantage. It was well remarked therefore by an ingenious French writer, *Que les plus grands ennemis des heros etoient leurs valets de chambre.*

(21) It is a proof of the early rectitude of Cato's disposition and judgement, that at his first entrance into the world he selected from the rest of his shining contemporaries Fabius Maximus, as the principal object of his esteem and imitation. There is nothing indeed, that tends more to give the mind its proper bias, than the company and conversation of those who have eminently distinguished themselves in the paths of honour and virtue : *Est aliquid*, (to express the significant language as well as sentiment of Seneca,) *quod ex magno viro vel tacente proficias.*

Man is by nature imitative; and the power of example operates upon him by an insensible, but resistless, force. In morals, therefore, as well as in the fine arts, whoever would excel must have the *works* of the great masters in view; not indeed as constraining guides to be servilely followed, but as friendly luminaries that serve at once both to enlighten his paths, and to kindle his emulation. It is thus "*the wise*," as Homer sings, and our British bard repeats the song,

*The wise new wisdom from the wise acquire,
And each brave hero fans another's fire.*

Plut. in vit. Fab. M. Sen. Ep. 94.

(22) The author of this law was Q. Voconius Saxo, tribune of the people in the Y. of R. 578. Among other clauses it enacted, that no person whose estate was rated in the censor's roll at a certain specified sum, should leave by will more than a fourth part of his possessions

sessions to a woman, The prohibition of this law seems to have been designed to guard against the too frequent effect of female influence, by securing to the heir, at all events, a sufficient part of the family-estate to support his rank and station. Aulus Gellius has preserved a remarkable passage from the speech which Cato made upon this occasion, not much to the credit of the Roman matrons. The venerable orator observed, that “ married women frequently reserved these testamentary devices as a separate estate for their own use ; and that the husband’s affairs sometimes obliged him to have recourse to it by way of loan : but upon such occasions, if any dissension afterwards happened between them, the wife was generally found to be the most troublesome and importunate of his creditors.” *Frein. sup. in Liv. xli. Aul. Gel. xvii. 6.*

(23) Cato’s

(23) Cato's son was married to Tertia, one of the daughters of Paulus Æmilius.

(24) The celebrated persons here mentioned, flourished together in the same period: and they were, each of them, equally distinguished for those patriotic virtues, and that simplicity of manners, for which the Romans in the earlier ages of their republic, have so just a claim to our admiration. They respectively exercised the consular dignity during the war with Pyrrhus: which commenced in the Y. of R. 474, and continued 'till the year 480, when Pyrrhus, being totally defeated by the conduct and courage of Curius, was constrained to abandon Italy. *Plut in vit. Pyrrh. Blair's chron.*

(25) Pyrrhus, in the second Y. of his invasion of Italy, being disposed to compromise matters with the Romans, dispatched Cineas to Rome in order to negotiate

negotiate a peace with the senate. The ambassador having laid the terms of his commission before that august assembly, several of the members appeared inclined to accept the king's proposals. Appius Claudius, who on account of his great age and the loss of his sight had long retired from all public business, being informed of the disposition in which several of the senators stood, immediately caused himself to be carried by his domestics to the senate house; where he opposed the treaty in question with such force of reason and eloquence, as prevailed with the majority of the members to reject the king's overtures. *Plut in vit. Pyrrh. Cic. in Brut. 14.*

(26) The second Punic war, under the glorious conduct of the first Scipio Africanus, terminated so much to the advantage of the Romans, that by the treaty of peace concluded in the Y. of R. 553, the Carthaginians were constrained

strained to submit to the severe condition of surrendering their whole fleet, besides paying them a very considerable sum of money, towards re-imbursing the expence of their armaments. Nevertheless, in about half a century afterwards, the Carthaginians had so far recovered their former strength, as to be still a very formidable power. For this reason, Cato never ceased to urge the necessity of utterly extinguishing this rival-state: and as often as he had occasion to deliver his opinion in the senate, he constantly (whatever subject the debate happened to turn upon) concluded his speech with *delenda est Carthago*. His advice at length prevailed; and in the Y. of R. 605, war was accordingly declared. But he had not the satisfaction of seeing his wishes perfectly gratified; for he died soon after its commencement. The second Scipio Africanus, who very early in that war distinguished himself by his superior courage and martial abilities, was
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in the course of it advanced to the chief command : and, agreeably to Cato's wishes, he had the glory to finish it in the Y. of R. 608, by so complete a victory as to level Carthage with the ground, never to rise more. *Cic. de Off. Plut. in vit. Caton. Blair's chron.*

(27) There is no character that has been celebrated with warmer encomium, both by antient and modern historians, than that of the first Scipio Africanus ; as there seems to have been none that could better justify the most glowing colours of panegyric.

His military talents, altho' in no respect excelled by any of the most famous captains in Roman, or Grecian, annals, were by no means superior to the more amiable virtues of his heart : and it was by the qualities of the latter that he gained, in the estimation of every true judge of merit, more real glory than the most splendid victories could confer.

confer. The generous manner in which he treated the conquered nations, by restoring his prisoners, without ransom, to their relations, and by many other uncommon instances of the most enlarged and liberal spirit, gained over almost as many states to the interest of the republic, as he subdued by his invincible arms. Indeed, his whole conduct and deportment was singularly calculated to captivate the general affection and esteem of all with whom he had any negotiations; as he possessed in an eminent degree that *artem sibi conciliandi homines*, which Hanibal is said to have so much admired in Pyrrhus.

This illustrious Roman was no less distinguished by his humanity; and he was frequently heard to declare, that he “had rather save the life of a single
“soldier, than destroy a thousand ene-
“mies.” Scipio was equally conspicuous for a most refined and delicate sense
of

of justice ; of which he gave very striking proofs, upon occasions where the conduct of the enemy and the accustomed rights of war, might have excused a less scrupulous exertion of that glorious principle. But if there is any one among the many shining virtues that adorned his character, which peculiarly demand admiration, it is the singular proof he gave that in the gayest season of youth, and amidst the warmest exultations of conquest, he was still master of himself and superior to the tender and most prevailing seductions of the heart. The remarkable instance alluded to, cannot but be too well known to every English reader, to render it necessary to be here repeated ; as it is related by Sir Richard Steel in one of his Tatlers, with all that grace and elegance of narration which was the distinguishing talent of that celebrated writer. But there is a curious circumstance concerning this famous transaction, which is not so generally known, and may therefore be

be particularly mentioned. The young nobleman whose heart was engaged to Scipio's fair prisoner, as a pledge of the grateful sense he entertained of the Roman general's magnanimous conduct upon this occasion, presented him with a silver shield, on which this Spanish prince was represented as receiving from the hands of Scipio the beautiful captive to whom he was affianced. This shield, it is pretended, was by a most extraordinary accident, in the latter end of the last century, found at the bottom of the Rhone, and now preserved in the king of France's cabinet of medals *.

To crown all, this illustrious Roman was impressed with a strong sense of religious duties, and a firm belief of a super-

* An ingenious traveller hath totally overthrown the credit of this *supposed* piece of curious antiquity. "The so much celebrated buckler," says he, "of Scipio, upon due enquiry, is so far from being his buckler, that it is rather a basin, or dish well gilt

superintending Providence. In consequence of these sentiments, he never entered upon any important business either of a public or private nature, without retiring to the capitol, and imploring the assistance of the divinity to whose honour that temple was consecrated. It must be acknowledged however, that he seems to have mixed some degree of policy with these his public acts of devotion; and to have endeavoured to raise an opinion in the people, that he received unusual communications of the divine favour.

“gilt and embossed; for, according to the antient
“form of armoury, it is too unwieldy, and its concavity within no way suited to the bending of the
“arm and covering the body. Add to this, that
“all bucklers, both antient and modern, have their
“ornaments of painting, or gilding, on the outside,
“and not within the concavity; and I remember that, talking with M. Patin, a great antiquary of Padua, upon this subject, he was of the
“same opinion.”—*Northleigh's Trav. in Harris's Collect. I. 735.*

The important services he had rendered his country, in conjunction with those eminent private virtues which he had upon every occasion displayed; seem to have given him such an ascendancy in the state, as to have raised in some of the most distinguished patriots of that age, a strong jealousy of his credit and power. That this jealousy was wholly without foundation, cannot reasonably be supposed; as Fabius Maximus, together with Cato, and Gracchus the father of the two famous tribunes of that name, were in the party of those who united to mortify his ambition and restrain his too extensive influence. To that end a prosecution was commenced against him: and the part he acted under this circumstance, seems to have been the only exceptionable article of his public conduct. For instead of vindicating his character from the charges of the impeachment, he treated the accusation with the utmost disdain; and refusing to comply with
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the summons for his appearance, withdrew to his villa at Liternum. This probably answered all the purposes which those who were the most moderate among his enemies, had in view by the prosecution ; as it removed him, by a sort of voluntary exile, to a sufficient distance from Rome to render his power no longer an object of danger, or alarm. In this retirement he spent the remainder of his days, amusing himself in the cultivation of his farms, and without discovering the least regret at being excluded from a scene, in which he had figured with so much honour to himself, and advantage to his country.

It may be thought, perhaps, the warm esteem which Cato expresses in the passage that suggested the foregoing remark, is inconsistent with his having been in the number of those jealous guardians of the Roman constitution, who took umbrage at Scipio's power ;

as indeed he constantly opposed its progress in all its gradual advances. It is by no means improbable, however, that Cato's opinion of Scipio was perfectly agreeable to the representation of it in the passage under consideration: for he was too sincere a lover of virtue, it should seem, not to admire and acknowledge the general merit of this great man's character; tho' in a political view of it, he might see consequences unfavourable to that spirit of equality so essential to a republican form of government. It must be confessed at the same time, that it will not readily be admitted that sentiments of this generous kind can be supposed to prevail among the opposite leaders of contending parties: it is certain, however, that they actually *did* prevail in one, at least, of Scipio's declared adversaries; I mean Gracchus. For when on Scipio's refusing to yield obedience to the citation mentioned above, it was proposed to send the proper officers to force him

him to appear ; Gracchus interposed his negative. He added, that his colleagues ought to be satisfied with the excuse of indisposition, which Scipio's brother had alledged for his non-appearance ; and that in consideration of his personal merit and the public services he had performed, his house ought to be respected as sacred from all violation. *Liv.* xxxviii. 52, 3. *Tatler*, ii. p. 40. *Memor. de l'Acad. des Inscrip.* i. 182. *Sen. Ep.* 85. *Corn. Nep. in Vit. Caton.*

(28) Altho' Cicero speaks very positively as to the year in which Scipio died ; yet Livy found so great a disagreement among the historians in relation to the date of this event, that he declares himself unable to ascertain the time. The general conjecture however is, that he died about the 57th year of his age. *Liv.* xxxviii. 56. *Vid. Pigh. Annal. sub an.* 568.

(29) So called from the Latin word *senex*. The members of this august assembly were originally distinguished by the title of fathers, *vel ætate*, says Sallust, *vel curæ similitudine*. Ovid has some pretty lines in allusion to the same etymology :

*Magna fuit capitis quondam reverentia cani,
Inque suo pretio ruga senilis erat.
Nec nisi post annos patuit tunc curia seros,
Nomen et ætatis mite senatus habet.
Jura dabat Populo senior, finitaque certis
Legibus est ætas unde petatur honor.*

Time was when rev'rend years observance found,
And silver hairs with honour's meed was crown'd.
In those good days the venerably old,
In Rome's sage synod stood alone enroll'd :
Experienc'd eld she gave her laws to frame,
And from her *seniors* rose the *senate's* name.

It appears, therefore, that according to the rules of its primary institution, and during the regular times of the republic, young men were excluded (and surely upon principles of the soundest policy) from a seat in this great council

council of the empire : but the precise age required for admission, is not with certainty known. Lycurgus, when he instituted the supreme council in Sparta, carried the qualification with respect to years somewhat too far, perhaps ; as he ordained that no man should be admitted a candidate for that great trust before he had completed the age of sixty. The moral qualifications which Cicero, in his book of laws, requires of the members of the Roman senate, might furnish a proper inscription over the entrance to every other public council of the same nature and importance : IS ORDO VITIO CARETO ; CÆTERIS SPECIMEN ESTO. In the opinion of the Roman legislator, if this great spring-head of national morals were preserved pure and unpolluted, every other civil and political benefit would flow to the state, as from its natural and proper source : or to express it in Cicero's emphatical language, "*Quod si est*

“ *tenemus omnia.*” *Sallust. Bel. Cat. 6.*
Plut. in Vit. Lycurg. Ovid. Fast. v. Cic.
de Leg. iii.

(30) Nævius was among the earliest of the Roman dramatic poets. Having in some of his writings given offence to a considerable family in Rome, he was driven into exile, and died at Utica in Africa in the Y. of R. 551. The following epitaph, which he composed for himself, is perhaps one of the most extraordinary instances of a poet's vanity to be met with in the annals of Parnassus :

*Mortales immortales flere si foret fas,
 Flerent divæ camænæ Nævium Poetam ;
 Itaque postquam est Orcino traditus Thesauro,
 Oblitei sunt Romæ loquier Latina lingua.*

If Gods the fate of mortals might deplore,
 Each muse would weep that Nævius is no more :
 All grace of diction with the bard is flown,
 And Rome's sweet language is in Rome unknown.

Ennius

Ennius is accused of having either borrowed, or stolen, much from the writings of Nævius: *qui a Nævio vel sumpſisti multa*, says Cicero, *ſi fateris; vel, ſi negas, surrepuisti*. But if he did, he took no greater freedoms with his predecessor's property, than was taken with his own by a succeeding poet: see note 2. *Aul. Gel. i. 24. Cic. in Brut. 19.*

(31) It was a prevailing superstition among the Romans, it seems, that to read the inscriptions on the monuments of the dead, weakened the memory. Of this very singular and unaccountable notion, no other trace, I believe, is to be found among the Roman authors but what appears in the present passage. Possibly it might take its rise from the popular notion, that the spirits of *malevolent* and *wicked* men, after their decease, delighted to haunt the places where their bodies, or ashes, were deposited; and there were certain annual rites celebrated at these sepulchres, for
appeasing

appeasing the ghosts. Vid. Platon. Phæd.
N° 3. ed. Foster. Ovid. Fast. II. 533.

(32) History has not recorded how long either Hesiod, or Homer, lived. Socrates was cut off by a most cruel and unjust sentence in his 70th year. And as to the rest of the several poets and philosophers here mentioned; Plato, who died the youngest of them, lived to eighty-one; Democritus to above an hundred; and each of the others to near ninety. Mr. Addison, in one of his Spectators recommending the virtue of temperance, makes a remark extremely applicable to the present passage: “And here,” says that admirable author, “I cannot but mention an
“ observation which I have often made
“ upon reading the lives of the philoso-
“ phers, and comparing them with any
“ series of kings, or great men, of the
“ same number. If we consider these
“ ancient sages, a great part of whose
“ philosophy consisted in a temperate
2 “ and

“ and abstemious course of life ; one
“ would think the life of a philosopher,
“ and the life of a man, were of two
“ different dates. For we find that the
“ generality of these wise men were
“ nearer an hundred than fixty years
“ of age at the time of their respective
“ deaths.” He adds, that “ it is ob-
“ served by two or three antient au-
“ thors, that Socrates, notwithstanding
“ he lived in Athens during the great
“ plague—which has been celebrated
“ at different times by such eminent
“ hands—never caught the least infec-
“ tion : which those writers unani-
“ mously ascribe to that uninterrupted
“ temperance which he always ob-
“ served.” *Spect.* No. 195.

(33) Solon was a poet, as well as a legislator. In the earlier part of his life, he seems to have devoted his muse to the tender passion ; but as more sober years advanced, his compositions took a graver turn : and it may be said of this

this famous law-giver, what our ethic poet says of himself,

*That not in fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to truth, and moraliz'd his song.*

Accordingly, he not only published several didactic and political poems, but also drew up a system of his laws in metre. The declaration cited in the text from one of his poems, is unquestionably a very strong proof of the rectitude of Solon's understanding: one cannot, therefore, without surprize, find it censured in Plato's book of laws. For "the most knowing man in the course
"of the longest life," as a noble writer has well remarked, "will always
"have much to learn; and the wisest
"and best, much to improve." The truth is, the human mind is never *stationary*: when it is not progressive, it is necessarily retrograde. He who imagines, at any period of his life, that he can advance no farther in moral or
intellectual

intellectual improvements, is as little acquainted with the extent of his own powers, as the antient voyager was with that of the terrestrial globe, who supposed he had erected pillars at the end of the world, when he had only left a monument how much farther he might have proceeded. *Plat. in Vit. Solon. Boring. Let. on Hist. i. 146.*

(34) Lord Bacon humorously remarks, that “Cato’s learning Greek in his old-
“age, was a judgment upon him for
“his blasphemy;” alluding to his having in a former part of his life expressed great contempt of the Greek philosophy. He had ventured indeed to prophesy the ruin of the constitution, whenever that sort of learning should become the fashionable study in Rome: and it must be owned, he did not take offence altogether without reason. He had conceived a very unfavourable opinion of its tendency, when the Athenians, in the Y. of R. 599, sent three of
7 their

their principal philosophers on an embassy to the republic. At the head of these was *Carneades*, a very celebrated leader of the Academic sect. While he was waiting for an answer from the senate, he employed himself in displaying his talents in the art of disputation: and the Roman youth flocked round him in great numbers. In one of these public discourses he attempted to prove, that “justice, and injustice, depend altogether on the institutions of civil society, and have no sort of foundation in nature.” The next day, agreeably to the manner of that sect, and in order to set the arguments on each side of the question in full view, he supported with equal eloquence the reverse of his former proposition. Cato was present at both these dissertations, and being apprehensive that the moral principles of the Roman youth might be shaken, if they should become converts to this indecisive mode of philosophizing, he was anxious to prevent its reception:

reception: and he did not rest till he had prevailed with the senate to dismiss these ambassadors with their final answer. *Bacon's Adv. of Learn.* xiii. 1. *Plut. in Vit. Caton.* M. *Plin. H. N.* vii. 30. *Quint. Inst.* v. 1.

(35) To those who form their notion of propriety altogether from modern customs and manners, the circumstance here mentioned concerning Socrates, may seem to derogate from the gravity and wisdom of his character. An old philosopher, taking a lesson from his music-master, is an attitude in which a sage of the present times would not choose to appear. But it was much otherwise in antient Greece, where music was considered not only as an accomplishment, but as an essential part of manly education, and no less favourable to the purposes of the philosopher and the statesman, than to those of the poet. Accordingly, Themistocles having declined at a public entertainment
to

to touch the lyre; his refusal was looked upon as a mark of his being deficient in a material article of liberal education. Instances indeed of the happy effects of music in moral, political, and even medical application, occur in the Greek and Latin writers. The great Roman critic, in particular, mentions a very remarkable proof of its beneficial influence on the passions. Pythagoras being at an entertainment where some young men had too freely indulged themselves in wine, overheard them consulting measures for fallying forth in order to violate the chastity of a certain maiden, belonging to a respectable family in the neighbourhood. The philosopher immediately ordered the minstrels to change the sprightly air they were then playing, to a certain piece of music composed in solemn spondaic measures. The transition operated in the manner Pythagoras intended: it wrought such an immediate change in those inflamed youths,

youths, that reason resumed its seat; and they instantly renounced the wicked outrage they had just before determined to perpetrate. It must be acknowledged, that this and other remarkable instances of the power which the great masters of music, among the ancient Grecians, are said to have maintained over the passions, have been questioned by some modern writers of considerable note, particularly by Dr. Wallis. But a late ingenious author, whose distinguished taste, judgment, and learning, in various branches of useful science and polite literature, were but the least valuable excellencies of his respectable character, has refuted the objections which have been made to the credibility of these accounts, with great strength of argument; and has vindicated the testimonies of Plato and Aristotle, who are the principal evidences of the fact in question, in so satisfactory a manner, as not to leave the least reasonable doubt concerning the

wonderful effects ascribed to antient music. See *Stillingfleet's Power & Princip. of Harm. p. 128, et seq. Tusc. Disp. i. 2. Quint. i. 10.*

Even in modern story, instances sometimes occur of the amazing change that has been wrought on the passions by the power of music. A remarkable relation of this kind is in Prince Cantimir's history of the Turks, as the passage is cited in a translation of a late ingenious French traveller's voyage into Greece: " Sultan Amurath, that
 " cruel prince, having laid siege to
 " Bagdad and taken it, gave orders for
 " putting 30,000 Persians to death, notwithstanding they had submitted and
 " laid down their arms. Among the
 " number of these unfortunate victims,
 " was a musician. He besought the
 " officer, who had the command to see
 " the sultan's orders executed, to spare
 " him but for a moment while he might
 " be permitted to speak to the emperor.

“ The officer indulged him in his in-
“ treaty ; and being brought before the
“ sultan, he was permitted to exhibit
“ a specimen of his art. Like the mu-
“ sician in Homer, he took up a kind
“ of psaltry which resembles a lyre,
“ and has six strings on each side ; and
“ accompanied it with his voice. He
“ sung the *taking of Bagdad, and the*
“ *triumph of Amurath*. The pathetic
“ tones and exulting sounds which he
“ drew from the instrument, joined to
“ the alternate plaintiveness and bold-
“ ness of his strains, rendered the
“ prince unable to restrain the softer
“ emotions of his soul. He even suf-
“ fered him to proceed, until, over-
“ powered with harmony, he melted
“ into tears of pity, and relented of his
“ cruel intention. In consideration of
“ the musician’s abilities, he not only
“ directed his people to spare those
“ among the prisoners who yet re-
“ mained alive, but also to give them

“ instant liberty.” *Guy's Let. on Greece*,
iii. 85.

(36) Some account has already been given of Coruncanius. See note 24. To his great abilities as a soldier he united the talents of a consummate lawyer ; and his opinion was held in such esteem, as to be decisive in all cases that concerned the theological and civil jurisprudence of his country. He was the first instance of a person of Plebeian rank being raised to the dignity of Pontifex Maximus.

Sextus Ælius and *Publius Crassus* were equally eminent for their superior knowledge in the laws of their country. Each of these illustrious persons, when arrived at a time of life in which he was no longer capable of exerting his abilities in the more active scenes of public affairs, still rendered himself useful to his fellow-citizens by his counsels

fels and advice. To this laudable purpose they respectively continued to frequent the forum; where they were daily accessible to all who desired to consult them, not only on matters of law, but upon every other article of private or public concern, in which their knowledge and experience could render them serviceable. *Liv. Epit. xviii. Cic. de Orat. iii. 33.*

(37) This venerable Roman acquired great reputation in his earlier years by a signal victory which he gained, during the first Carthaginian war, over Asdrubal, in Sicily: for which he was honoured with a triumph. Some years afterwards being *Pontifex Maximus*, he rendered himself no less famous by a remarkable instance of patriotic piety: for a terrible fire having broken out in Rome, which threatened destruction to the temple of Vesta, in which the sacred palladium was enshrined; he boldly rescued it from the flames at the im-

minent hazard of his life, and with the actual loss of both his eyes. As a public mark of distinction for this heroic act of piety, and in consideration of the fatal consequence which he suffered by it; he was allowed the privilege, whenever he attended the business of the senate, of being conveyed in a car: a privilege, which never was granted to any other Roman. In the Y. 522, the consuls being absent from Rome on an expedition against the Gauls; it became necessary to create a dictator, to preside at the general assemblies of the people for electing the annual magistrates: and Metellus, although he was then far advanced in years, as well as totally bereaved of sight, still maintained so much credit and authority in the republic, as to be unanimously appointed to that supreme dignity. *Liv. Epit. xix. Plin. H. N. vii. 43. Pigh. An. ii. 121.*

(38) Iliad i. Pope's trans. A different mode of the same mild, but persuasive species

species of eloquence, is so happily exemplified in another of Homer's heroes, and so beautifully copied by his inimitable translator, that the English reader cannot regret being turned a little out of his way, in order to have the pleasure of reviewing a fine passage which he has probably before admired. It is in the third Iliad, where Ulysses is represented as rising up to deliver his sentiments, with such an unpromising diffidence and confusion in his air and countenance, as made no favourable impression on the audience :—

*But when he speaks, what elocution flows !
Soft as the fleeces of descending snows,
The copious accents fall with easy art ;
Melting they fall, and sink into the heart.*

(39) Agamemnon having called a general council, in order to consider whether it would be most advisable to raise the siege and return to Greece ; several speeches are made upon the occasion, and Nestor closes the debate :

To him the king———

O ! would the Gods, in love to Greece, decree

But ten such sages as they grant in thee !

Such wisdom soon should Priam's force destroy,

And soon should fall the haughty towers of Troy.

Il. ii. 440. Pope's trans.

(40) The military tribunes were officers whose business was to decide all controversies that arose in the army; to give the word to the watch; to superintend the works, &c. In the war between the republic of Rome and Antiochus king of Syria (which broke out in the Y. of R. 562) M. Acilius Glabrio, who commanded the army in Greece, detached Cato with a considerable body of troops to dislodge a part of the king's forces, which had taken possession of the streights of Thermopylæ: and Cato executed this commission, which was the last of his military exploits, with great advantage to his reputation. These streights were before rendered famous in story, by the celebrated Leonidas, who with three hundred

hundred Spartans withstood, during three whole days, the troops of Xerxes, consisting of a million of men. *Plut. in Vit. Caton.*

(41) “Massinissa was king of Numidia, and once a declared enemy of the Roman common-wealth : but he was gained over to their alliance, by the generous treatment of the first Scipio Africanus ; who, having taken two of his nephews prisoners of war, sent them back to him without a ransom. From that time Massinissa always acted with great fidelity to the republic, and retained a particular friendship for Scipio, under whose roof he lodged when he visited Rome.”

Du Bois in loc. The relation between the host and the guest was held by the ancients, both Romans and Greeks, in the number of the most sacred connections. It arose from the general custom of receiving strangers when upon their travels : “a custom so universally
“established,

“ established, that they were scarcely
“ ever reduced to the necessity of tak-
“ ing up their lodgings at an inn.”
Tull. de Off. ii. 18.

(42) This person, whose name was *Cneius Scipio*, is scarcely ever mentioned by any other designation than “ the son of the first Scipio Africanus ;” no anti-ent author except Valerius Maximus, if I mistake not, having spoken of him by his proper appellation. It was his fortune, indeed, to be more known by the honour he derived from his birth, than by any other distinguishing circumstance of his life ; but it was the weakness of his constitution, not any defect of abilities, that prevented him from acting a conspicuous part on the public stage of the world. Cicero, in the treatise inscribed Brutus, speaks of him as one who would have figured among the celebrated orators of the age in which he lived, if the exertion of his talents had not been greatly re-
strained

strained by the ill state of health under which he perpetually laboured. He had given an advantageous specimen of his genius in this way, by some publications which were well received; particularly a portion of the Grecian history, written with peculiar elegance of expression, and with that powerful harmony of periods which was so much studied by the great masters of eloquent composition among the antients. In the war with Antiochus, king of Syria, he was taken prisoner: but that prince returned him to his father, by those ambassadors whom he sent to Scipio with proposals of peace. Valerius Maximus represents his suffering himself to fall into the hands of the enemy, as a circumstance of the highest disgrace: and produces this instance, among others, of persons who have shamefully degenerated from the spirit of their ancestors. But the censure seems to be uncandid; for the same fact is recorded by every one of the antient historians,

historians, without the least intimation of its having been considered by his contemporaries as a stain upon his character. *Cic. de Clar. Orat.* xix. *Val. Max.* iii. 5. *Liv. Hist.* xxxviii. 37. *Appian. de Bel. Syr.* 106.

(43) The historical tracts, here mentioned, consisted of several pieces relating to the history and antiquities of Rome, particularly the first and second Carthaginian wars, together with an account of the principal cities of Italy. The whole was drawn up, not only with great accuracy and knowledge of the subject, but with singular grace and elegance of expression. *Quem florem,* says Cicero, speaking of this work in another part of his writings, *aut quod lumen eloquentiæ non habent?* The speeches he collected and published amounted to about 150; in which, as we are assured by one of the greatest masters of eloquence that Rome ever produced, Cato displayed all the powers

ers of a consummate orator. Accordingly, he was styled by his contemporaries the “Roman Demosthenes;” as he is frequently mentioned by the subsequent writers, under the designation of Cato the *Orator*. It should seem indeed that there are still extant some very striking proofs of this venerable patriot’s rhetorical abilities; as it is highly improbable that Livy, in those speeches he has inserted in his history as delivered by Cato, should have had recourse to invention, when the originals were published and in every body’s hands. Nor are his productions upon the subject of law intirely lost; if it be true, as some civilians suppose, that he is the author of the *Regula Catoniana*, treated of in the seventh title of the 4th book of the Digest. *Corn. Nep. in Vit. Caton. Cic. in Brut. 17. Plut. in Vit. Caton.*

(44) It was not in order to exercise and improve the memory, that Pythagoras

goras

goras enjoined his disciples the practice of this nightly recollection: it was for a much more useful and important purpose. The object of the philosopher's precept is indeed wholly of a moral nature; as appears from that noble summary of his ethics, supposed to be drawn up by one of his disciples, and known by the name of the *golden verses of Pythagoras*:

Μηδ' ὑπνον μαλακοῖσι ἐπ' οὔμασι, &c.

*Nightly forbear to close thine eyes to rest,
Ere thou hast question'd well thy conscious breast
What sacred duty thou hast left undone?
What act committed which thou ought'st to shun?
And as fair truth, or error, marks the deed,
Let sweet applause, or sharp reproach, succeed.
So shall thy steps, while this great rule is thine,
Undevious tread in virtue's paths divine.*

It is not a little surprising that Cicero should have considered this great precept merely in its *mechanical* operation upon one of the faculties of the human mind,

mind, and have passed over unnoticed its more important intent and efficacy ; especially as he had so fair an occasion of pointing out its nobler purpose. Horace has applied it to its proper use ; and, with his usual address, has indirectly recommended it to his reader's practice, by exemplifying the benefit of it in his own :

——— *Neque enim cum lectulus — me*

——— *Excepit, desum mihi : “ Rectius hoc est ; ”*

“ Hoc faciens vivam melius, sic dulcis amicis

“ Occurram ; ” Hoc quidam non belle ; numquid ego illi

*“ Imprudens olim faciam simile ? ” — Hæc ego mecum
Compressis agito labris.*

Perhaps, there never was a rule of conduct delivered by any uninspired moralist, which hath so powerful a tendency to promote the interests of virtue as the present precept. It is scarcely possible that the man who every night he lays his head on his pillow, reviews his actions of the day past, and fairly brings them to the tribunal of his conscience,

science, should not rise the next morning with stronger impressions of his social and religious duties, and with a more guarded attention to avoid those moral deviations he had so severely arraigned.

(45) Cato stood so high in the esteem of his country, by the repeated and unquestionable proofs he had given of his superior wisdom and integrity, that in all occurrences of difficulty, or danger, the public looked up to this honest and sagacious patriot, as to an experienced pilot, by whose judgment and advice the state-helm might most securely be steered. In consequence of this just and general opinion of his probity and abilities, it was usual, if any question of importance happened to come before the senate in his absence, to adjourn the debate till they could receive the benefit of his counsel and assistance. *Plut. in Vit. Caton.*

(46) Archy-

(46) Archytas was greatly distinguished in his generation, as a soldier, a state's-man, and a philosopher : characters which, although by no means incompatible, are rarely found united but in antient story. In his *martial* capacity, his fortune seems to have been at least equal to his genius ; for tho' he had frequently commanded in the day of action, he never but once lost a battle. As a *state's-man*, he was held in such high esteem, that he was seven times raised to the chief magistracy of Tarentum, notwithstanding an express law of the common-wealth by which no man was capable of being elected a second time into that office. As a *philosopher*, he was ranked among the most famous of the Pythagoric sect ; and had studied under the celebrated founder of that distinguished school. The branches of science in which, besides ethics, he principally excelled were, astrology, geometry, and mechanics. This great man, who flourished in the fourth cen-

tury from the foundation of Rome, added to the other advantages which distinguished his character, the happiness and the honour of being the friend of Plato.

It is supposed that he perished by ship-wreck: a supposition founded on an ode of Horace, in which Archytas is introduced as imploring the rites of sepulture from a certain merchant, who in the course of one of his commercial voyages, happened to approach the shore where the body of Archytas lay unburied. It seems, however, by no means clear, that the person who gave occasion to this ode, is the famous Archytas of Tarentum. It is indeed highly improbable, that the poet should send his muse into so remote a period as three hundred years from his own times, in quest of a subject uninteresting to the age in which he wrote, and from which the only apparent inference to be drawn, is a very trite and common moral.

moral. If this ode, therefore, really relates to the same Archytas who is the principal object of the present remark; it seems reasonable to believe, that it is much mutilated, and that those verses which marked its application to some recent circumstance of the times have been lost. And what strengthens this conjecture is, that it is the only composition in the writings of this admirable lyrist, that does not either directly, or obliquely, point at some present, or late occasion. But be this as the critics may determine; it is at least indisputable, that the ode in question has furnished the pathetic Prior with hints for one of the most elegant and affecting elegies that ever appeared in the English language. *Diog. Laert. in vit. Archy. Hor. Od. i. 28. Prior's Ode to the mem. of Col. G. Villiers.*

(47) In the Y. of R. 432, the two consuls here mentioned marching at the head of the Roman army in order to

P 2

attack

attack the Samnites, fell into an ambuscade which had been most artfully laid for them by Caius Pontius, who commanded the enemy's troops. The Roman forces not being able either to advance or to retreat, were compelled to deliver up their arms and submit to such other ignominious terms as were imposed by the victors. *Liv. ix. 1.*

(48) The office of censor was the highest honour, to which the ambition of a Roman citizen could aspire. Besides other great powers annexed to this magistracy, it gave a right to inquire into the private life, and moral conduct, of every Roman. Even the senate was no sanctuary against its jurisdiction: and a censor had the power to expel a member from that assembly, who upon any occasion had acted a part unworthy of his rank and character. Cato was candidate for this post in the Y. of R. 568; and he succeeded, notwithstanding the principal
part

part of the nobility strained every nerve to prevent his election. They had reason indeed to dread his being chosen : for he entered upon the office with an honest and inflexible resolution of exercising its functions agreeably to the important ends for which it was instituted. Accordingly, he exerted the censorial powers with much advantage to the common-wealth ; as he pointed the whole force of his authority against that luxury and licentiousness, which were now beginning to make those first vigorous shoots, that in the subsequent ages universally over-run, and at length, by ruining the virtue, destroyed the liberty, of the republic. The singular spirit and integrity with which he administered this high employment, did not pass without suitable marks of public approbation : and he was honoured, by a general vote at the expiration of his office, with a statue and inscription, which was or-

dered to be erected in the temple of the goddess *Salus*.

The infamous transaction which called forth his censorial chastisement on the person mentioned in the text, is related by several of the antient writers, but with some immaterial variation in respect to circumstances. The account Livy gives of this matter, seems to rest upon the most authentic foundation; as he took it from the speech that Cato delivered upon this very occasion: a speech, the historian observes, in which the powers of reason and eloquence were so forcibly united, as would have constrained even the brother himself of Flamininus to have passed sentence against him, had he presided as judge at the trial. The general purport of the charge as stated by Cato was, that Flamininus having prevailed upon a noble youth with whom he was engaged in an abominable connection, to attend him into the province;

vince; the boy was perpetually complaining that in order to comply with his desire, he had lost the opportunity of being present at the gladiatorial combats in Rome. It happened, while Flaminius was in the midst of a public entertainment and flushed with wine; that a message was delivered to him from a certain nobleman of Gaul, acquainting him that he was arrived with his family in the Roman camp and desired to surrender himself into the proconsul's protection. Flaminius ordered him to be introduced: and while the unfortunate Gaul was addressing his speech to him, the proconsul, turning to his pathic, "You were disappointed," said he, "of being present at the gladiatorial combats in Rome, but do you wish now to see a man die?" The youth had scarce time to reply, when Flaminius snatched up his sword; and by an unexampled act of the most perfidious and wanton cruelty that ever disgraced human nature, plunged it into

the stranger's heart. *Plut. et Corn. Nep. in vit. Caton. Liv. xxxix. 50. et seq.*

(49) In the Y. of R. 471, and in the consulate of Fabricius, the Samnites, (a nation which inhabited a district of Italy now called Abruzzo) together with almost all the other Italian states, took up arms against the republic. To these hostilities they were principally instigated by the Tarentines; who not thinking the confederate armies, in conjunction with their allies, sufficiently strong to oppose the Romans, applied for succour to Pyrrhus king of Epirus. This celebrated commander readily accepted the invitation; and soon landed at Tarentum at the head of a very considerable body of troops. In the course of the war, Fabricius, together with two other persons of principal rank, were commissioned by the senate to treat with Pyrrhus concerning an exchange of prisoners: and it was at an entertainment

tainment given to the Roman ambassadors upon this occasion, that Cyneas, the favourite and able minister of Pyrrhus, related to them the general principles of the Epicurean doctrine.

Epicurus began to teach his philosophy in Athens, the place of his nativity, about twenty years before this conversation is said to have passed; and which probably was the first notice the Romans received of a system, that in after times became the fashionable doctrine in Rome. That such a genius as Lucretius should appear in the number of its warmest converts and admirers, is a remarkable instance that reason has sometimes proved the dupe of imagination even in the finest understandings :

*Yet Poet and Philosopher
Was he, who durst such whims aver !
Blest, for his sake, be human reason,
That came at all, tho' late, in season.*

PRIOR'S *Alma*, cant. I.

Indeed,

Indeed, the wildest reveries of fancy never conceived a more absurd and extravagant romance, than that great poet has delivered as a sober system of physics, in one of the noblest didactic poems extant. But although his master's *natural* philosophy has been justly rejected with contempt; his *moral* doctrine has received, perhaps, a severer treatment than it deserved. Unfortunately in this respect for the credit of Epicurus, as well as for the conduct of some of his less discerning followers, he made use of an ambiguous term to express the *governing* motive and *ultimate* object of human pursuits: for if he had called it happiness, and not *pleasure*; his disciples, it is probable, would not so generally have mistaken his *meaning*, nor wandered with shame and disappointment through the paths of voluptuousness, in quest of that felicity which is only to be found in those of virtue.

Epicurus

Epicurus was the last among those sages of antient Greece, who distinguished themselves as institutors of new systems; the subsequent philosophers of note in the different sects, having no otherwise rendered their names famous than by explaining, or improving, the general principles of their respective founders. Indeed, to speak with strict historical precision, Epicurus himself was not the original author of the theory that passes under his name; as the fundamental principle of his physiological system was the antient atomical philosophy, which had been *revived*, and introduced into Greece, by Democritus about a century before him. *Plut. in vit. Pyrrh. Blair's chron. Diog. Laert in. vit. Epict.*

(50) In a battle which was fought between the republic and the Latins in the Y. of R. 457, Decius, who commanded the left wing of the Roman army, finding his troops begin to yield
to

to the impresson of the enemy, had great reason to apprehend a general rout would ensue. In this exigency he had recourse to *devotement*: by which a commander in chief, making a voluntary oblation of his own life in the field of battle, was supposed to appease the anger of the Gods, and reconcile them to the cause of his country. Accordingly Decius, instantly calling upon the high priest to pronounce the form of invocation appointed by the Roman ritual for that purpose, rushed into the midst of the engagement; where after having performed wonders of valour, he was at length cut to pieces by the enemy. In a subsequent war with the Samnites, Publius Decius, the son of the former, sacrificed his life in the same manner, and upon a similar occasion. This superstition took its rise from the spirited conduct of some heroic captains of more remote times, who when they were strongly pressed in battle, and saw their troops giving way, endeavoured to call them

them back to the charge, and sometimes, perhaps, secured the victory, by this animating and heroic exposure of their own lives to certain and immediate destruction. It is to be observed, however, that these military sacrifices prevailed only in the earlier ages of the common-wealth. In more improved times, the principle upon which they were founded began to be questioned; it was asked, *Quæ fuit Deorum tanta iniquitas, ut placari populo Romano non possent nisi viri tales occidissent?* The good sense which suggested this question, soon taught the Romans, that although courage inspired by superstition has sometimes led to unexpected victory; yet a principle of honour united with a spirit of ambition, are motives at least equally vigorous, and much more likely to pursue the proper measures for obtaining the same end. Accordingly in the latter and more enlightened periods of the republic, we find this ceremony, together with others of the
same

same supposed efficacy in matters of war, rated at their true value ; and if not in every respect totally laid aside, yet observed merely in compliance with vulgar credulity, and popular attachment to antient forms. *Liv.* viii. 9. x. 23. *Cic. de N. D.* ii. 3. iii. 6.

(51) The signal victory mentioned in the text, was obtained by Duilius in the Y. of R. 495, and the gallant commander was honoured with the pomp of a public triumph. But this was not the only distinction conferred on his important services. The Romans in order to transmit the memory of them to future generations, caused silver medals to be struck, and also a pillar of white marble adorned with naval ornaments to be erected in the forum. Both these memorials have had the uncommon fortune not to disappoint the purpose for which they were intended : as some of the medals are still to be seen in the cabinets of the curious ; and the
marble

marble pillar with its inscription, accidentally dug up in the last century, is at present the object of the traveller's admiration in the piazza di campidoglio of modern Rome. Nothing indeed seems to have been wanting to complete the glory of this illustrious action, but that Duilius had been less sensible of it himself; as the ostentatious privilege he assumed in consequence of it, betrayed a vanity altogether unworthy of a great spirit. *Non contentus unius diei triumpho, says Florus, per vitam omnem, ubi a cæna rediret, prælucere funalia, præcinere sibi Tibias jussit, quasi quotidie triumpharet. Pigh. annal. ii. 22. Flor. ii. 2.*

(52) Cybele, a divinity said to be the mother of the gods, was worshiped at Pessinus in Phrygia, under the figure of a rude stone; which was reported to have fallen from heaven on mount Ida. The Sybilline oracles being consulted in consequence of several prodigies which

which alarmed the republic in the Y. of R. 549 ; the persons appointed to inspect those pretended prophecies, declared that certain advantages, which they particularly specified, would accrue to the common-wealth, if this extraordinary image could be procured and brought to Rome. A solemn embassy was appointed for that purpose : and the statue, if a shapeless stone may be so called, was accordingly obtained.

The *confraternities* mentioned in the text, were societies established in honour of particular divinities, and for the purpose of celebrating their annual festivals. A custom of the same kind prevails in Roman catholic countries, where in every great town there are societies under the title of *confrairies*, who meet to celebrate the anniversary of the particular saint whom they have chosen for their patron. And well it would be, if this were the only instance
of

of conformity between Papal and *Pagan* Rome! *Liv.* xxix. 10.

(53) The Romans, by a custom derived to them from Greece, usually appointed at their social meetings a president of the club, who was either nominated by the general consent of the company, or chosen by ballot. When the principal object of these parties, was to indulge themselves in the pleasures of the table; the business of the *chairman* (to express his title in modern phrase) was to regulate the mode of drinking, and announce the laws to be observed for that purpose: to which he usually added, *aut bibe, aut abi.* To these laws and the admonitory clause generally annexed to them, the *sermo in poculis qui a summo adhibetur*, mentioned in the text, seems to allude. As regulations of this sort had certainly more of constraint than is consistent with that ease and freedom so essential to the true enjoyment of the social pleasures;

fures ; one cannot but wonder that this custom, which undoubtedly took its rise in the ruder ages of the Roman common-wealth, should have continued during its politest and most improved period. Horace, however, agreeably to that refined good sense and elegance of sentiment which distinguishes his character, saw and condemned the absurdity of this practice ; as the guests at his own table, he tells us, were subject to no other rules but such as their particular taste and inclinations suggested :

——— *Prout cuique libido est*

Siccat inæquales calices conviva, solutus

Legibus infanis.

When the company consisted of men of a speculative and philosophical turn ; the president had a farther office assigned to him besides that already mentioned. He proposed the topics of conversation, and delivered out such questions for their common discussion as
might

might prove at once both instructive and amusing. To this end, it was necessary that the person so officiating should be well acquainted with the respective talents of the several members of the society; as it was his business, by starting suitable subjects for their examination, to give each in his turn an opportunity of displaying his peculiar genius and powers. Some very valuable specimens of the nature of these literary assemblies, and the manner in which they were conducted, have been preserved in the writings of Xenophon and Plutarch.

For the rest, it appears that Cato, notwithstanding he observed in general a most abstemious sobriety, did not scruple, upon proper occasions, a little to deviate from the severe rules of a rigid temperance. It was with great propriety, therefore, that Horace cited the example of this venerable sage, as an encouragement to his philosophical friend

friend to taste freely of the good old wine he had broached on purpose for his entertainment :

*Narratur et Prisci Catonis
Sæpe mero caluisse Virtus.*

The truth is, the poet might, upon this occasion, have exhorted his friend to a less restrained enjoyment of the good cheer he had prepared, by an higher authority than even that of Cato ; if indeed good sense could appeal to any authority higher than its own. For Plato expressly recommended it to his disciples to indulge themselves sometimes in a free participation of these convivial pleasures, as conducive to very important purposes of a moral kind. By occasionally complying, to a certain degree, with the gay humour of those lively parties, they would learn, he told them, to converse in the world with less danger from its allurements ; and prove the strength of their virtue, not by declining opportunities

tunities of putting it to the trial, but by vigorously exercising it in the midst of temptations. The philosopher added, that a farther advantage might also be drawn from a moderate indulgence sometimes in these table-gratifications; as a free circulation of the cup, not only enlivened and invigorated the powers of the mind, but frequently called forth the latent passions of the soul, and gave a man an opportunity of discovering and correcting those secret flaws in his temper and disposition which otherwise might have lain concealed, perhaps, from his most attentive scrutiny. *Plut. Symp. i. 4. Tusc. Disp. v. 41. Hor. Od. iii. 21. Plato de Leg. ap. Aul. Gal. xv. 2. et Macrob. Saturn. ii. 8.*

(54) That sociable and chearful spirit, which Cato preserved to an extreme old-age, is particularly remarked by Plutarch in his life of this venerable Roman; as indeed it is one of the most uncommon, as well as the most pleasing features

features in his illustrious character. For “old-age” (as the sensible Montagne with his usual force and boldness of metaphor strongly expresses it) “is
“apt to impress as many *wrinkles* on
“the mind, as on the body; and there
“are very few when advanced to that
“period of life, *qui ne sentent l'aigre*
“*& le moisi.*” It was from this singular
liveliness of good-humour, that Cato’s
company was sought, not only by men
of the same age with himself, but by
persons of much younger years; as the
natural vivacity of his disposition, to-
gether with his great knowledge and
experience of the world, rendered his
conversation equally instructive and en-
tertaining. The usual turn of his dis-
course with his friends at table, is a
proof of the enlarged and manly sen-
timents of his heart; as it generally
gave him occasion to speak with honour
of those among his country-men who
had distinguished themselves by their
public, or private, virtues; discourag-
ing,

ing, at the same time, every topic which tended to gratify that little, malevolent spirit of detraction which is so apt to infect the conversation of those who, not being qualified to rise to any degree of eminence themselves, delight in exposing the blemishes of others. In short, what was said of Plato's suppers, might with equal truth be applied to Cato's: "they afforded a *feast* the "next day." To be able indeed to review with satisfaction and advantage those hours which have been passed in conversation, is a benefit that does not always attend them: and perhaps it is not often that a rational mind, after having spent an evening in what the world calls *good* company, may not look back upon it with the same reflections which the poet puts into the mouth of Solomon;

What had been said, I ask'd my soul, what done;

How flow'd our mirth, and whence the source begun?

Q 4

Perhaps

*Perhaps the jest that charm'd the sprightly crowd,
 And made the jovial table laugh so loud,
 To some false notion ow'd its poor pretence ;
 To an ambiguous word's perverted sense ;
 To a wild sonnet or a wanton air ;
 Offence and torture to the sober ear.
 Perhaps, alas ! the pleasing stream was brought
 From this man's error, from another's fault ;
 From topics which good-nature would forget,
 And prudence mention with the last regret.*

Montag. iii. 430. ed. par Coste. Plut.
 in Vit. Caton. Prior's Solomon, B. ii.

(55) A celebrated actor who flourished about the Y. of R. 590. It appears that he performed a part in the representation of several of Terence's plays.

(56) He seems to have been the first Roman whose astronomical skill extended so far as to be capable of calculating an eclipse. His knowledge of the planetary revolutions was of good service to Paulus Æmilius, in whose army he serv'd as legionary tribune, when that great commander in the Y. of
 R. 585,

R. 585, led the troops of the republic against Perſes king of Macedon. For the day before that deciſive engagement, in which the Roman general obtained a complete victory over the king's forces; Gallus apprized the ſoldiers that an eclipse of the moon would happen that night. He aſſured them at the ſame time, that it was by no means an ominous and alarming appearance, but a regular and neceſſary effect of thoſe laws which nature had eſtabliſhed in the heavens, and which human ſcience was able with great certainty to inveſtigate. In conſequence of this prediction, the Roman army beheld the expected phænomenon without the leaſt foreboding apprehenſion: whereas the Macedonian troops, on the contrary, looked up to it with terror and diſmay as a prodigy that announced, (and of courſe therefore contributed to facilitate) their total overthrow. *Plin. H. N. ii. 12. Liv. xliv. 37.*

(57) With

(57) With respect to *Nævius* see note 30. *Plautus* is well known to the English reader, by an excellent translation which lately appeared in our language. *Livius Andronicus* was the first poet that exhibited a regular drama at Rome ; in the year 541. But his works were so little esteemed in a more refined age, that Quintilian does not even mention his name when he is enumerating those Latin poets, who had been distinguished by the tragic muse. Concerning *Crassus*, see note 36. *P. Scipio*, the chief pontiff, was usually distinguished by the appellation of *Corculum*, in allusion to those humane and social virtues which particularly marked his character. He was the son of Scipio Nasica, who had the honour of being declared, by the unanimous voice of the senate, the worthiest man in Rome. *Marcus Cornelius Cethegus*, by an instance which rarely occurs in the Roman history, was advanced, in the Y. of R. 549, to the dignity of censor before he had passed

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ed through the office of consul. He greatly signalized his valour in the second Punic war. *Quint.* x. 1. *Pigh. An.* ii. 358. *Liv.* xxix. 2.

(58) Cato was author of a great variety of treatises, upon subjects of public utility. It is observable, that they were all of them composed only in his leisure hours, and during those intervals of public business which necessarily suspended his more important labours. By these his instructive productions, he exemplified a noble maxim which he laid down in the introduction to one of them, and which Cicero in his oration for Plancius with so much reason extols: *Clarorum virorum atque magnorum non minus otii quam negotii rationem extare oportere.*

The particular work mentioned in the text, is the only part of his numerous writings which have come down to us entire. The venerable author enters into the most minute detail of rural œconomy,

nomy, and instructs the farmer in the best manner of preserving his fruits, of fattening his poultry, and even of making all sorts of pastry. But among the rules he has laid down for the husbandman's direction, there is one in which his spirit of parsimony has carried him much beyond those bounds that a sensible and generous nature will always set to every consideration of profit. In his advice to the farmer to dispose of all his useless stock, he does not scruple to specify the selling of a slave, worn out with labour and infirmity in his master's service. *Vendat boves*, says this severe œconomist, *vendat servum senem, servum morbosum, & siquid aliud supersit, vendat.*

Plutarch, who in his life of Cato takes notice of this ungenerous precept, has added reflections upon it that do honour to the nobler feelings of his own most excellent heart. “In my opinion,” says this humane and amiable author,

author, “ to consider a slave as merely
“ a beast of burden, and to drive him off
“ your land, or sell him, when age or
“ infirmities have disabled him from
“ work; is the mark of a base and for-
“ did mind, who looks upon his species
“ as standing in no other relation to
“ him than as they are capable of admi-
“ nistering to his interest or conveni-
“ ence. But the laws of humanity,
“ which nature has so deeply impressed
“ on the heart of man, create duties to
“ which the institutions of civil policy
“ cannot extend: they require us to
“ exert sentiments not only of tender-
“ ness, but on some occasions, of gra-
“ titude too, even towards the brute
“ creation. In conformity with this
“ principle, to continue to nourish our
“ old horses and dogs that are no lon-
“ ger able to perform those labours in
“ which we employed them during the
“ days of their strength and vigour, is
“ an act perfectly suitable to that innate
“ impression of compassion which is the
“ distinguishing characteristic of the
“ human

“ human species. In consequence of
“ this sensibility of disposition, the
“ Athenians, after they had completed
“ the building of the temple called the
“ *Hecatompedon*, exempted from all fu-
“ ture toil, those beasts of burden whose
“ labours had assisted in carrying on
“ that sacred edifice; turning them into
“ the public meadows to range in ease
“ and liberty during the remainder of
“ their lives. Thus likewise, near the
“ tomb of Cimon, may still be seen the
“ sepulchre of those horses with which
“ he thrice obtained the prize at the
“ Olympic games.

“ The story of Xanthippus, father of
“ Pericles, is well known. When the
“ Athenians, during the war in which
“ they were engaged against the Per-
“ sians, were constrained to abandon
“ their city and retire to the island of
“ Salamis; Xanthippus embarked with
“ the rest of his countrymen. His
“ faithful dog having been left behind,
“ swam

“ swam after the ship till it reached the
“ shore; where the poor creature was
“ no sooner landed than he threw him-
“ self down exhausted with fatigue,
“ and expired at his master’s feet. Xan-
“ thippus buried him on the spot: and
“ as a grateful memorial of his fidelity,
“ erected a monument over his grave,
“ which remains to this day, and is
“ known by the name of *Cynossema*, or
“ the dog’s sepulchre.

“ The truth is, we ought not to use
“ creatures endowed with a sensitive
“ soul, as if they were void of all feel-
“ ing: and we should accustom our-
“ selves to treat them with tenderness,
“ were it for no other reason than as an
“ exercise of our humanity, and in or-
“ der to render our hearts, by habitual
“ sentiments of this kind, the more dis-
“ posed to exert the kind affections to-
“ wards our own species. For myself
“ at least; I could not be prevailed
“ upon, by any consideration, to part
“ with

“ with an ox that had grown old and
“ infirm by labouring in my grounds;
“ much less could I be induced, for the
“ sake of a little pecuniary advantage,
“ to sell an old worn-out slave, and by
“ thus driving him from my family,
“ banish him, as it were, from that
“ scene and those habits of life to which
“ he had been long accustomed.”

To these generous sentiments of the humane Plutarch, I shall only add, that the same spirit of tenderness and gratitude towards that animal, to which the husbandman is so much obliged, appears to have actuated some of the antient legislators in the earlier ages of the world. The good-natured prohibition of Moses “ not to muzzle the ox
“ that treadeth out the corn,” will no doubt occur to every reader’s mind upon this occasion. Among the Athenians there was a law, that rendered it penal to kill an ox that had been yoked either to the plough or the cart. The
same

same restriction, under no less a penalty than banishment, was to be found in the Roman code, in the first ages of that republic. And in both instances, the reason, expressly assigned for the law, is founded upon the same generous principle which Ovid puts into the mouth of Pythagoras in those famous lines,

*Immemor est demum, nec frugum munere dignus,
Qui potuit, curvi dempto modo pondere aratri,
Ruricolam mactare suam; qui trita labore
Illa quibus toties durum renovaverit arvom,
Tot dederat messes, percussit colla securi.*

Unworthy he to reap the fertile field,
Whose soul to pity's generous feeling steel'd,
Aims, with ungrateful hand, the murd'rous
stroke

To fell his ox just recent from the yoke;
The patient partner of his daily toil,
Who many a year has plough'd the stubborn
soil!

*Plut. in Vit. Caton. Ælian. Var. Hist. v. 14. Plin.
H. N. viii. 45. Ovid. Met. xv.*

(59) Some of the commentators have observed, that Cicero's memory failed him in this place ; as Laertes, in the passage alluded to, is not found employed in dunging his ground, but

- - - - - stood,
And clear'd a plant encumber'd with its wood.
Pope's Transf.

(60) The success of the Roman arms against the Samnites, in the Y. of R. 462, having compelled the enemy to sue for peace ; the senate left the terms to be settled at the discretion of Curius Dentatus, the brave commander of their victorious troops. The deputies from the Samnites found the hero dressing his own dinner, which consisted only of pot-herbs : and it was in this situation that he rejected, with the magnanimous spirit mentioned in the text, the very considerable bribe they presumed to offer him. *Plut. Apoph. Val. Max. iv. 3.*

(61) Cin-

(61) Cincinnatus was twice invested with this supreme authority : and the two facts which Cicero has blended together, were divided by an interval of several years ; the former respecting his first dictatorship, which was in the Y. of R. 295 ; and the latter having happened when he filled that office a second time, in the Y. 314. The occasion of this absolute power being committed to his trust, at the period last mentioned, arose from the dangerous practices of Sp. Mælius ; who, taking advantage of the distress the public laboured under at this time by a general famine, had rendered himself extremely popular by supplying the poor with corn at his own expence. It having been discovered that he was concerting means, by the assistance of the populace, to overturn the government ; the dictator summoned him by Servilius Ahala, his master of the horse, to appear before his tribunal. Mælius refusing to obey, and appealing to the people for protection ;

R 2

tion ; Ahala rushed into the midst of the mob and stabbed him to the heart.

As to that other circumstance, of Cincinnatus being found conducting his plough, by the persons deputed from the senate to announce his being appointed dictator ; it is a story too generally known to require a particular recital : but a story, however, as Livy remarks, that cannot be too often repeated to those, who think nothing is despicable but poverty, or truly honourable and praise-worthy but riches. Or, to express that admirable historian's sentiment in his own more emphatical language, *operæ pretium est audire (says he) qui omnia præ divitiis humana spernunt, neque honori magno locum neque virtuti putant esse, nisi ubi effusè affluent opes.* Liv. iii. 26. iv. 12.

(62) The epithet which Cicero here gives to this famous Lacedæmonian general, ill agrees with his true character ; if history has not been extremely

ly

ly unjust to his memory. With respect indeed to *martial* virtues, Lyfander's superior merit may perhaps be admitted; but for the rest, his conduct was stained with two of the blackest vices that can disgrace the human heart; cruelty and perfidiousness. To give a specimen of his principles: one of the maxims by which he governed his actions was, that "men are to be duped
" by oaths, as children are by toys."

The prince with whom Lyfander held the conversation related in the text, was the second son of Darius Nothus; who invested him at a very early age with the sovereignty of all those provinces belonging to the Persian empire, which were situated in Asia Minor. He was brave but ambitious; and was slain in the field of battle, attempting to wrest the imperial crown from Artaxerxes Mnemon, his elder brother.
Plut. in Vit. Lyfand. et Artax.

(63) The Hetrurians (a people whose territory is now partly comprehended in that district of Italy called St. Peter's patrimony) having broken the truce which they had made with the republic in the Y. of R. 454; the Romans sent an army into their country, to take vengeance for their breach of faith: and the command was given to T. Manlius Torquatus. But that general having soon after been killed by a fall from his horse; Valerius Corvus was chosen to succeed him in the consulship. His election was attended with a circumstance which had never happened before: for his character was so universally revered by the people, that they gave him their general suffrage without one dissenting voice. This was the sixth time of his being raised to the consular dignity; and the last of his military expeditions. But although he was now far advanced in years, his appearance at the head of the Roman army so terrified the Hetrurians, that they immediately retired within

within their intrenchments, and could by no means be provoked to give him battle. This great man (to give his character in the words of a late ingenious historian) “ was not only a thorough
“ patriot, and perfect pattern of that
“ zeal which men owe to their country ;
“ but an excellent model of the paternal
“ care which the head of a family ought
“ to have of his children, and relations.
“ Great in peace, and great in war, Valerius Corvus shone eminent among
“ those heroes who appeared in the
“ most glorious, because in the most
“ virtuous, age of Rome.” *Pigh. An. Hooke’s R. H. i. 543.*

(64) *Metellus* early distinguished himself by his talents and his virtues, in the several departments of the state to which he was called by the general voice of his country : and his old-age proved no less glorious to himself, and beneficial to the republic, than every former period of his honourable life.

See note 37. *Attilius Calatinus*, after having been twice consul, was in the Y. of R. 504 advanced to the dictatorship. Cicero scarcely ever mentions his name in any part of his writings but in terms that speak the warmest sentiments of his merit: and indeed his character appears to have been universally admired. When it is considered that Calatinus flourished in the golden age of the republic, and in the same period with *Coruncanius*, *Curius*, and *Fabricius*; it must be acknowledged, that it is not in the power of language to convey a stronger idea of exalted virtues, than is expressed in the very simple, but significant, epitaph inscribed on his monument, and alluded to in the text: UNO. ORE. PLURIMÆ. CONSENTIUNT. GENTES. PRIMARIUM. POPULI. FUISSE. VIRUM.

(65) Some account of *Crassus* has already been given. See note 36. It appears by the Epitome of Livy, that

M. Lepidus died in the Y. of R. 602. If he is the same person, therefore, whose name is registered in the Capitoline marbles, as consul in the year 521; he must have been more than a hundred at the time of his death, even supposing him to have been elected into that office considerably sooner than the legal age. *Liv. Epit. xlviii.*

(66) The college of augurs: it consisted at this time of nine members, the eldest of whom was always *magister collegii*, or president of the society. Their business was to interpret omens, prodigies, &c. and to determine, by the principles of divination, whether any particular measure in question would prove fortunate, or the contrary.

(67) It seems somewhat extraordinary, that Cicero should assert, there is no *possible* medium between the soul's ceasing to exist after death, or continuing to exist for ever. A temporary duration

tion in a future state, is undoubtedly *possible*: and it was a tenet actually maintained by the Stoics. Zeno held, as Laertius informs us, Τὴν Ψυχὴν μετὰ θανάτου ἐπιμενεῖν· φθαρτὴν δὲ εἶναι· or, as Cicero himself has elsewhere, in more explicit terms, represented this opinion, “*diu manfuros aiunt animos, semper nergant.*” Their notion was, that the soul is an emanation of the divine essence; into which, after having existed during a certain period in a detached state, it would again be resorbed at the general consummation of all things. With respect to the subsequent words which our author puts into the mouth of Cato, *quid igitur timeam, si aut non miser post mortem, aut beatus etiam futurus sum?* it may admit of a question, whether this is to be understood in a restrictive sense, and as expressing only Cato’s personal hopes of a happy immortality, from a consciousness of his endeavours to deserve it; or whether it is to be considered as a general

neral

neral declaration of his sentiments, that the doctrine of a future state of *punishment* is absurd and groundless. It is certain that Cicero expressly derides the popular belief concerning the nature of those punishments which would be inflicted on the impious in a future state: *quæ est Anus tam delira*, he asks his friend in the Tusculan Questions, *quæ timeat ista?* And it is equally certain that the antient philosophers considered this article of the vulgar creed in the same light with Cicero. It has been asserted indeed by an ingenious foreign writer, that these philosophers went much farther; and not only rejected with contempt those *modes* of future punishment which were set forth in the *public* religion; but, “by maintaining that *vindictive* justice could not enter into the attributes of the Supreme Being, totally subverted one of the strongest pillars of morality.”

[*Entretiens de Cic. sur la Nat. des Dieux, par l'Abbé Olivet, vol. iii. p. 134. rem.*

3. & p. 321.] The authority upon which the learned Abbé rests this charge, is founded on a passage in Cicero's treatise *de officiis*, in which it is affirmed to have been the unanimous opinion of *all* the philosophers in general, *numquam nec irasci Deum, nec nocere*. But these premises do not seem necessarily to lead to the conclusion inferred from them. For admitting that those irascible and vindictive passions, which instigate human resentments, are incompatible with the divine nature ; it by no means follows, that the offender against the laws of moral duty, had nothing to fear from the hands of the supreme Governor of the world. Accordingly, the same philosophers who contended for this innoxious and unresentful character of the Deity, no less strenuously maintained that transgressors would not escape with impunity. Thus Seneca unites both those propositions, as being perfectly compatible with each other. *Errat, says he, si quis putat Deos nocere velle : non possunt.*

Nec

Nec accipere injuriam queunt, nec facere.—
Hi nec dant malum, nec habent: cæterum
castigant, et coercent, & irrogant pœnas, &
aliquando specie boni puniunt. Plutarch
 also connects the same principles, and
 points out their consistency, by repre-
 senting the divine punishments as so
 many merciful remedies, which natu-
 rally tend to correct and heal the moral
 diseases of the soul, and restore her
 original sanity: Ου γαρ αμυνεται (ο Θεος)
 τον αδικησαντα κακως παθων, says that
 knowing and' sensible writer, ουδε οργι-
 ζεται τω αρπασαντι βιασθεις, ουδε μισει τον
 μοιχον υβρισθεις, αλλα ΙΑΤΡΕΙΑΣ ΕΝΕΚΑ ΤΟΝ
 ΜΟΙΧΙΚΟΝ, &c. ΚΟΛΑΖΕΙ.

As it appears, therefore, that the doc-
 trine which Cicero, in the treatise above
 cited, affirms to have been maintained
 by *all* the philosophers, concerning the
 moral attributes of the Deity, is in no
 respect inconsistent with the belief of
 a future state of *punishment*; it seems
 reasonable to conclude that, in the pas-
 sage which gave occasion to the present
 remark,

remark, he had no intention to assert, in an absolute and unrestrained sense, that the only consequence which would follow death, was either a total extinction of being, or a happy existence of endless duration. And that he cannot fairly be charged with entertaining so absurd an hypothesis, is farther evident from his own express declarations in other passages of his writings, particularly in the conclusion of *Scipio's Dream*, where he admits that a distinction will be made in the condition of the virtuous and the wicked, in a future state. Nor is there any just reason to suspect that this was not his real persuasion: not only as it is a doctrine most consonant with reason and the general opinion of mankind; but as it was maintained by all the disciples of the Socratic and Platonic schools; that is, by those sages whom Cicero admired even to a degree of enthusiasm, and looked upon all who dissented from their principles, as philosophers of the lowest class: *plebei*

philosophi appellandi videantur, says he, *qui a Platone & Socrate, et ea familia, dissident.* *Tusc. Disp. i. 21.* *Lips. Phys. iii. 11.* *Tusc. Disp. i. 23.* *Theolog. des Philosoph. par l'Abbé d'Olivet, iii. p. 321.* *Sen. Ep. 95.* *Plut. de iis q. tard. a num. corrip.*

(68) He was prætor in the Y. 601; and died before the expiration of his office. His father took the care of his education into his own hands; training him to all those manly virtues, and instructing him in the several branches of useful knowledge, in which he himself so eminently excelled. The young man profited accordingly: and when he came forth into the world, proved himself the worthy son and disciple of his wise and revered instructor. *Liv. Ep. xlviii.* *Plut. in Vit. Caton.*

(69) This venerable monarch is mentioned by several of the Greek and Roman writers, as an extraordinary instance

stance of longevity; particularly by Pliny the Naturalist, who thinks there is great reason to believe, that his life extended even to 130 years. It is altogether uncertain at what period this prince flourished: some authors place his reign about the 130th year of Rome; but a late learned and ingenious antiquarian with better reason supposeth it to have been about the Y. of R. 214, or 540 before Christ. The capital of his territories was *Tartessus*; which the last mentioned author, together with some other respectable writers, assign strong reasons for believing to have been the famous port of *Tarſis*, to which Solomon's commercial fleets resorted. It was situated on the southern coast of Spain, not far from the present city of Algeziras. *Plin. H. N. viii. Carter's Journ. from Gibralt. to Malaga, vol. i. p. 60, et seq.*

(70) Solon, after having established his celebrated laws in Athens, withdrew from that city, and set out upon
his

his travels ; in which he passed several years. When he returned, he found the common-wealth split into three dangerous factions : at the head of one of these was Pisistratus, whose party Solon with great spirit, though very ineffectually, opposed. *Plut. in vit. Solon.*

(71) Although the practice of suicide too generally prevailed among the ancient Greeks and Romans ; yet it was a practice condemned by the best and wisest of their philosophers. Nothing can be more clear and express than the prohibition of Pythagoras with respect to this act, as cited by Cicero in the present passage : and in this he was followed both by Socrates and Plato. Those noblest and most enlightened of the Pagan moralists, considered suicide as an act of rebellion against the authority of the Supreme Being ; who having placed man in his present post, hath reserved to himself alone the right of determining the proper time for his dismissal.

sion. Agreeably to these principles, Cicero in his relation of Scipio's dream, represents the departed spirit of Æmilius as assuring his son, who had expressed an impatience of joining him in the heavenly mansions, that there was no admittance into those regions of felicity for the man who attempted to force his way into them by his own *unauthorised* act. The Platonic poet, it is well known, places those unhappy persons in a state of punishment, who not having the piety and the courage to support their misfortunes with due resignation, impiously endeavoured to deliver themselves by venturing to be their own executioners.

————— *Quam vellent æthere in alto
Nunc et pauperiem & duros perferre labores !*

Virg.

“ *Oh ! with what joy the wretches now would bear
“ Pain, toil, and woe, to breathe the vital air !*”

Pit.

Plotinus

Plotinus also, one of the most approved writers among the later Platonists, hath entered his protest against the lawfulness of self-murder, in a treatise written expressly upon the subject. This piece indeed, though still existing, hath never been printed : but the general principles upon which he argued, appear from several passages of his writings quoted by Macrobius. Among these, there are two which deserve to be particularly noticed ; as they place the crime in no common, though at the same time, in a very striking point of view. The mere act itself, he observes, abstracted from all other considerations which give it a criminal complexion, is committed with so much perturbation of mind as to discompose the soul with passion, in the very instant of its departure from the body ; and consequently dismisses it in a temper ill qualified to be associated with the pure and undisturbed spirits of a better world. He adds (and it is a reflection that de-

serves to be well-weighed by those who favour the practice he opposes) that he who in any other instance deviates from the line of moral duty, like a man who stumbles in a plain path, may easily recover his former ground; whereas he who is guilty of suicide, may be resembled to a man who makes a false step on the edge of a precipice; his fall is desperate and the consequence irretrievable.

Such were the sentiments of the most approved moralists among the antient philosophers. The doctrine of the Stoics, it must be acknowledged, was more relaxed upon this important article. But although they did not scruple to represent it even as a *duty* in some very *particular* circumstances; they ought, if they had reasoned consequentially from their own principles, to have held it forth as highly criminal in *all*. For there is no precept of morality which they inculcate more frequently
nor

nor in stronger terms, than an unlimited submission to the dispensations of providence. The truth is, the antient writers of this sect, are not more at variance with reason, than with themselves, in what they have delivered upon this subject. Inconsistency indeed, is one of the characteristical marks of the Stoical system; as Plutarch has proved by a variety of instances drawn from the writings of Chrysippus. Those of Seneca and Epictetus may equally be produced in support of the same charge; so far at least as relates to their sentiments on the present question. For they sometimes contend for the lawfulness of suicide without any restriction; sometimes only under very peculiar situations; and sometimes zealously press upon their disciples, as an indispensable obligation, the duty of a pious acquiescence under all the various calamities of human life. Agreeably to this last position, Seneca, in answer to a querulous letter he had received from

his friend Lucilius, occasioned by some domestic accident that had discomposed his mind ; represents to him how much it is the duty of a good man to fortify his soul against all events, and submit to the *worst*, not only without complaint, but with a firm persuasion that “ *whatever is, is right.*” *Præparetur animus contra omnia : sciat se venisse—ubi*

Luctus & ultrices posuere cubilia curæ,
Pallentesque habitant morbi, tristisque senectus.

— *Hanc rerum conditionem mutare non possumus : id possumus, magnum sumere animum & viro bono dignum, quo fortiter fortuita patiamur et Naturæ consentiamus.—Ad hanc legem animus noster aptandus est — et quæcunque fiunt debuisse fieri putet—et Deum, quo auctore omnia proveniunt, sine murmuratione comitari.—Hic est magnus animus qui se Deo tradidit : at contra, Ille pusillus ac degener, qui obluetatur, et de ordine mundi male existimat, & emendare mavult*
Deos,

Deos, *quam* se. “ A wise and good
 “ man,” says he, “ should stand pre-
 “ pared for all events ; remembering
 “ that he is destined to pass through
 “ a world where pain and sorrow, dis-
 “ ease and infirmity are posted in his
 “ way. It is not in his power to change
 “ these conditions upon which he re-
 “ ceives his present existence ; but it
 “ certainly is, to submit to them with
 “ that fortitude, and acquiescence in
 “ the laws of nature, as becomes a vir-
 “ tuous mind. It should be our con-
 “ stant endeavour therefore to reconcile
 “ our minds to these unalterable laws
 “ of providence, and to submit to them
 “ without murmur, or complaint ; ful-
 “ ly persuaded that every thing is as it
 “ ought to be, and that the government
 “ of the world is in the hands of the
 “ Supreme Being. To deliver himself
 “ up to that Being with an implicit and
 “ unreserved resignation, is the mark
 “ of a truly great soul ; as it is of a base
 “ and little mind, to entertain unwor-

“ thy suspicions of the order establish-
“ ed in the world, to attempt to break
“ through the laws of providence, and
“ instead of correcting his own ways,
“ impiously presume to correct the ways
“ of God.” *Sen. Ep. 107.*

To the same purpose, and with equal inconsistency, is the doctrine of Epic-
tetus; on the one hand telling those
who complain under the pressure of
any calamity, that they have the re-
medy in their own power; and on the
other, exhorting them to bear with a
patient composure of mind the evils
that attend human life, and not pre-
sume to deliver themselves by an un-
warranted desertion of that post in
which the Supreme Being has thought
proper to place them. *Vid. Lips. Stoic.*
philos. iii. 22, 23.

Upon the whole, it appears evident
that the wisest and most respectable
of the antient philosophers considered
suicide

suicide as a criminal act; and that those among them who maintained the contrary opinion, yet admitted and inculcated principles utterly subversive of that pretended right which they supposed every man to have over his own life: so little can those unhappy men be justified by the authority of the Greeks and Romans, who rashly flee from the evils of the present scene, by a desperate and presumptuous intrusion into

*That undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns !*

(72) The regal government being dissolved by the expulsion of Tarquin in the Y. of R. 244; the two first consuls, one of whom was Junius Brutus, put themselves at the head of their troops in order to oppose Tarquin's attempt to recover his throne: who for that purpose had entered the Roman territory, supported by a considerable force.

force. As soon as the two armies came in fight, Brutus was marked out by Aruns, one of Tarquin's sons, who commanded his cavalry: and both chiefs furiously advancing before their respective troops, they were mutually slain by each others sword. *Liv.* ii. 6. Concerning the *Decii*, see note 50.

(73) Marcus Attilius Regulus was a second time consul in the Y. of R. 497; the republic being then engaged in the first Punic war. During some part of it, Regulus commanded, both by sea and land, with distinguished courage, conduct and success; but at length his army being defeated and himself taken prisoner, he was sent in chains to Carthage. While he remained in this situation, the fortune of war turning to the disadvantage of the Carthaginians, they sent ambassadors to Rome, in order to prevail with the senate to accept terms of peace, or to agree to an exchange of prisoners. Regulus was permitted to accom-

accompany the ambassadors ; having previously engaged upon oath, that if they did not succeed in their negotiation, he would return to Carthage and surrender himself again their prisoner. But when he took his place in the senate, he strongly dissuaded them from entering into any sort of treaty with the enemy : and in consequence of his opinion, the ambassadors were dismissed with an absolute refusal of the alternative they had offered. The brave and virtuous Regulus, incapable of violating the faith he had solemnly pledged, returned to Carthage agreeably to his engagement : where soon afterwards, instead of being applauded and honoured for so unexampled a proof of inflexible integrity, he was basely and cruelly put to a most painful death.

Horace has celebrated the singular virtue and spirit which this illustrious captive displayed upon this occasion, in one
of

of the noblest strains of his immortal lyre. The reality, however, of those tortures which Regulus is said to have sustained on his return to Carthage, hath been questioned, and with great appearance of reason, by some modern writers of considerable note in the republic of letters. See *Hooke's R. H.* ii. 47. 4^{to} ed. *Eutrop.* ii. 17. 21. 25. *Hor. od.* iii. 5.

(74) The two brothers here mentioned, were Cneius and Publius Scipio. The former, who was father to the first Scipio Africanus, being consul in the Y. of R. 535, when Hanibal was preparing to invade Italy; the command of the republic's forces in Spain was committed to his charge. Having embarked his troops for that province, and advanced as far as Marseilles, he learned that the Carthaginian general had actually passed the Pyrenees. Suspending, therefore, his original destination, he re-landed his army with an intent of opposing the enemy's passage over
the

the Rhone: but Hanibal had already passed that river. Upon these news, the consul re-imbarked his troops: and dispatching his brother, with the greatest part of the army, into Spain; he returned into Italy with the remainder, in the hope of being able to reach the foot of the Alps before Hanibal could arrive there. Soon afterwards the two armies came to an engagement; in which Scipio's troops were defeated, and himself dangerously wounded. In the farther progress of this war, Cneius Scipio joined his brother Publius in Spain; where they greatly signalized their martial abilities. But in the course of their operations having thought it expedient to divide their forces; they were separately attacked by the enemy, and each of them slain in battle at the head of their respective forces. *Liv. xxv. 34. et seq.*

(75) Lucius Æmilius Paulus, together with C. Terentius Varro, were chosen

chosen consuls in the Y. of R. 537, when Hanibal obtained a complete victory over the Romans, in the famous fields of Cannae. The two consuls being appointed by the senate to take the command of the army; they found the Carthaginian general so advantageously posted, that Æmilius thought it by no means prudent to hazard a battle. But his colleague Varro was of a different opinion: and accordingly made such movements as necessarily brought on a general engagement; in which Æmilius, after having exerted the noblest efforts both of courage and conduct, unhappily lost his life. *Liv. xxii. 44. et seq.*

(76) In the eleventh year of the second Punic war, the Romans laid siege to *Locri*, a maritime city in the southern part of Italy. Between Hanibal's intrenchments and those of the assailants, was a little hill which Marcellus and Crispinus, the two consuls who commanded the Roman troops, thought to be

be a post of so much importance, that they went with a guard of two hundred horse in order to reconnoitre the spot. In attempting to execute this design, they fell into an ambuscade; and Marcellus, endeavouring to retreat, was mortally wounded. When Hanibal was informed of this event, he appeared affected with the misfortune of this distinguished captain; whose military talents he had often, in the course of this war, severely experienced. Accordingly, as a mark of the singular esteem in which he held the virtues of Marcellus, he ordered his body to be laid with great solemnity on a funeral pile; and gathering his ashes into a silver urn, he sent them in this honourable manner to his son Marcellus. *Plut. in vit. Marcell.*

(77) That the soul had an existence prior to her connection with the body, seems to have been an opinion of the highest antiquity; as it may be traced in the Chaldean, Egyptian, and Grecian
9 theology,

theology, as far back as there are any records remaining of their speculative tenets. This general notion, however, was not maintained universally in the same precise sense; some considering the soul in its former state as subsisting only in the great soul of the universe; whilst others held its prior distinct and personal individuality. Those philosophers who maintained the latter opinion, at least the generality of them, seem to have supposed that the soul is sent down into this sublunary orb, as into a place of punishment for transgressions committed in a former state. And this theory claims the greater attention, not only as it appears to have been adopted both by the Pythagoric and Platonic schools, which undoubtedly produced the most respectable philosophers that ever enlightened the pagan world; but as bearing strong marks of being primarily derived from the Mosaical account of the *fall* of man. Indeed some christian writers of no inconsiderable rank

rank in the learned world, have thought the narrative of that great event as related by the sacred historian, is to be understood in an allegorical sense ; and that under a figurative representation the inspired author means to set forth the pre-existent state of the human species. How far this interpretation is agreeable to the general *tenour* of divine revelation, is not the object of the present remark to inquire ; but it is certain the sacred scriptures so far at least confirm the antient tradition; that they equally represent man as in a *lapsed* condition. Nor was this opinion a vain and unprofitable speculation in the schools of the philosophers : they applied it to the most important purposes of morality. By inculcating on their disciples a firm persuasion of man's exalted origin, they endeavoured to point their ambition to its noblest object, and animate them in the exercise of those virtues that would open their way to a re-admission into those celestial mansions,

VOL. I. T fions,

fions, from which they had been banished into this lower world. *Macrob. in somn. Scip. i. 9. Stanley's Hist. of Philos. p. 553. Brucher's Inst. Philos. 198. Diog. Laert. in vit. Pythag. & Platon.*

(78) The great uncertainty concerning the age and country in which this very celebrated philosopher was born, has occasioned much critical controversy: the most prevailing opinion, however, seems to be, that he was a native of Samos, an island in the Archipelago; and that his birth is to be placed in some period between the 608th, and 568th, year before the christian æra.

Pythagoras, after having visited the most distinguished seats of learning among the eastern nations, and resided a considerable time also in Egypt, settled at Crotona; a city in that part of Italy which was then known by the name of great Greece, and which comprehends the kingdom of Naples. It was here
he

he taught that system of physiological and moral philosophy which hath rendered his name famous through all succeeding generations ; as most of the subsequent philosophers who became founders of the different sects which sprung up in Greece during a period of 370 years, borrowed from it many of their principal tenets. But what is still more to his honour ; modern philosophy is also indebted to him for some very considerable articles of physical science. This system he composed partly from the discoveries of his own penetrating genius, and partly from those theories in which he had been instructed by the men of science with whom he had conversed, in the course of his very extensive travels. Among his tenets of the latter kind, the doctrine he taught concerning the soul of the world may justly be considered : for it appears to have been an opinion of a much earlier date than the period in which Pythagoras flourished. He maintained *Deum*

esse animum per naturam omnium rerum intentum & commeantem, ex quo nostri animi carperentur; that God is a mind co-expanded with and intimately pervading the material universe; and that the human soul is a portion of this soul of the world. In what manner he explained this notion, can only be collected from the writings of his disciples; for he either composed none himself, as Plutarch affirms; or if he did, as Laertius maintains, they have long since perished in the wreck of time. Perhaps his genuine doctrine is nowhere more likely to be discovered, than in the writings of Plato; whose theory in this article, as in many other of its branches, was derived from Pythagoras.

Plato's notion then appears to have been, that the universe was actuated by an intelligent and vivifying spirit, which permeates through all its parts
in

in the same manner as the human soul (which he held to be co-essential with the mundane soul) animates and informs the human body. In consequence of this opinion he maintained also, that the heavenly orbs were each of them actuated by intelligences of the same substance with the soul of man, but of a superior order; and that they had a just claim, as being so many inferior divinities, to the *subordinate* homage of mankind.

This opinion, that the host of heaven were animated by living intelligences, had prevailed in the eastern parts of the world long before philosophy was cultivated in Greece; and seems to have given rise to *Astrolatry*, or the first species of creature-worship into which mankind were misled by a false theology. These principles, however, were not peculiarly adopted by the Pythagoric and Platonic schools: they were received also by the Stoics and some

others of the leading sects among the Grecians ; but with this difference, that while the former carefully distinguished the supra-mundane soul, from the soul of the world ; the latter seem frequently, in terms at least, to confound the divine architect with his work, and speak of the *animated* universe as being itself the supreme Deity. *Vis Deum mundum vocare ?* says Seneca, *non falleris : ipse enim est totum quod vides ; totus operibus suis inditus.* A late philosophical poet seems to have been led into the same system ; most certainly at least he holds the *same language* with those antient theologists who represented God and nature as making together one compound individual being :

*All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul ;
That chang'd through all and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth as in the ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glews in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,*

Lives

*Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
 Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
 Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
 As full, as perfect in a hair as heart;
 As full, as perfect in vile man that mourns,
 As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns:
 To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.*

Although the poet in the foregoing lines delivers in express terms the precise doctrine of the Stoics, who maintained *Deum animum hujus universi, corpus ejus ipsum universum*; yet it would not be candid to suppose that he really believed, and meant to propagate, the same opinion. But perhaps it would be no breach of charity to suspect, that the acknowledged “*master of the poet and the song,*” might have embraced that tenet. The implicit deference, therefore, which, it is well known, his friend and *pupil* paid to his superior understanding, will account for this doctrine having gained admission (imperceptibly, perhaps, to the

poet himself) into this celebrated, though, it should seem, not very consistent, system of natural theology. *Lips. Manud.* i. 6. *Physiolog.* ii. 10. *Vie de Pythag.* par *Dac. Brucker Inst. Philos.* 184. *Cudworth intellect. Syst.* 533. fol. ed. *Essay on Man*, i.

(79) It is uncertain upon what occasion this great *patriarch of philosophy*, as a noble author emphatically styles him, was distinguished by the oracle with this honourable designation. *Lactertius* seems to intimate, that it was conferred upon him on account of that practical wisdom which so strongly marked every part of his exemplary conduct, particularly in the equanimity and moderation with which he bore the severe trials to which his patience was frequently exposed. But *Socrates* himself, as we learn from *Cicero* in another part of his writings, assigned a different and more probable reason; attributing this high encomium to his just discernment

ment of the limits of the human mind, and confining his philosophical researches to the proper objects of human understanding : the chief attainment whereof could rise no higher, he said, than to “ know how little can be “ known.” It was indeed one of the principal labours of this noble moralist, to subdue the vanity of pretended science ; to call down philosophy from those *ideal* flights in which she had hitherto wasted her strength and powers ; and bring her home to her proper office, the moral improvement of human life. The truth is, the preceding sages, Pythagoras alone perhaps excepted, had little concerned themselves with establishing the important principles of ethics ; their studies being chiefly directed to physiological enquiries. Accordingly, each philosopher endeavoured to distinguish himself by some new theory ; and “ *with all the rash* “ *dexterity of wit,*” employed his talents
in

in constructing worlds, and disclosing the imaginary secret by which nature performed all her wonderful operations. Socrates considered these specious reveries of misapplied genius, as so many philosophical romances: and, with great force of ridicule, exposed them to the contempt they well deserved. The philosophy that he himself taught, was altogether of a different cast: it turned upon a subject (to borrow the poet's expression) *quod magis ad nos pertinet & nescire malum est*; as it investigated the principles of moral science, and pointed out the paths that lead to present and future felicity. *Diog. Laert. in Vit. Socrat. Cic. Acad. i. Tusc. Qu. v. 4. Xenoph. Mem. i. 11. et seqq.*

(81) Plato, in the dialogue intituled *Phædo*, represents Socrates on the morning of his execution as holding a conversation with his friends on the soul's immortality; in which, among other arguments,

arguments, he endeavours to establish the doctrine of the soul's future existence, upon the principle of its having existed before its union with the body. This was attempting to support the truth of the hypothesis in question, by resting it on another altogether conjectural and precarious. But these two propositions, tho' totally distinct from, and unconnected with each other, were held by all the antient philosophers who maintained the future permanency of the soul, to have a mutual dependence, and necessarily to stand, or fall, together. For as they raised their arguments for the soul's immortality, chiefly on metaphysical ground; "they clearly perceived," as the very learned Cudworth observes, "if it were once granted that the soul was generated, it could never be proved but it might also be corrupted." Reasonings of this kind indeed, are generally more specious than satisfactory: and, perhaps, every sensible reader, after perusing what

what the most acute metaphysicians have written on this important article, will find himself not very far from the same state of mind as Cicero's Tusculan disciple was after reading Plato: *nescio quomodo*, says he, *dum lego assentior; cum posui librum, assensio omnis illa elabitur.*

Let it not, however, be inferred from hence, that arguments from this quarter are of *no* force: they prove, as far as the nature of a substance can be proved by its properties, that the soul is a simple, uncompounded essence; and therefore not physically liable to a dissolution. But if to this consideration be added those proofs which the antient philosophers seem to have overlooked, or but slightly touched upon; those proofs, I mean, which are drawn from the divine attributes, considered with relation to the moral nature of man, and the circumstances in which he is placed; the evidences of a future state
rise

rise to a degree of certainty little short of the clearest mathematical demonstration.

If the sceptical Montagne, therefore, had duly considered the strength of those conclusions which are derived from this source; he could not have ventured so confidently to assert, that *Qui retentera son estre & ses forces et dedans et dehors—qui verra l'homme sans le flatter: il n'y verra ny efficace ny faculté qui sente autre chose que la mort et la terre.* [Mont. i. 485.] Forlorn indeed would the state of man be, if this were a faithful picture of his condition; if his hopes of another life were but the delusions of self-flattery, which will totally vanish upon a just survey of his real circumstances and situation. Happily, however, the truth is much otherwise: the more he inquires into his moral or intellectual nature, and examines the state of things with which he is surrounded; the more he will be

7 convinced

convinced that the expectations of an after-life in some future scene of existence, are not less evidently confirmed by the dictates of sound philosophy, than they are *universally* (either by some general impression, or common tradition) suggested to the mind previous to all reasoning concerning the matter. Several eminent modern writers have collected and illustrated these *moral* proofs, with all the powers of genius and reason united; particularly the elegant Mr. Addison in some of his inimitable essays, and the excellent author of the *religion of nature delineated*.

(81) Those guardian spirits which the Romans distinguished by the name of *household deities*, were a species of good demons, or tutelary divinities, to whose special protection particular families were supposed to be assigned. These *lares familiares*, as they were termed, were imagined to be the departed souls

souls of virtuous men, who, as a reward of the good deeds they had performed in the present life, were appointed after death to the pleasing office of superintending the concerns of their respective descendants. This is the account that Apuleius gives of these friendly beings: and to these, probably, Xenophon in the present passage alludes. It is certain at least, that the agency of departed spirits in the affairs of this sublunary world, was a doctrine maintained by many of the most considerable philosophers of antient Greece: and it was so early received into their systems of natural theology, that Plutarch in his treatise *de defect. oracul.* is at a loss to determine when, and by whom, it was introduced. But the fact seems to be, that its true origin can only be traced in the sacred records; where we find the ministry of intermediate beings frequently employed in executing the decrees of providence with respect to man. Thales, Pythagoras, and some others

others of the Grecian fages maintained, that the region of the air was inhabited by beings of this order; and Milton hath represented Adam in the state of innocence, as instructing Eve in the same doctrine, in those beautiful lines:

— Nor think tho' men were none,
That heaven would want spectators, God want
praise.

*Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep:
All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
Both day and night. How often from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket, have we heard
Celestial voices to the midnight air
(Sole, or responsive to each other's note)
Singing their great Creator? oft in bands
While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds,
In full harmonic number join'd, their songs
Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heaven.*

Lips. Physiol. Stoic. i. 13. Parad.

Loft, iv. 675, et seqq.

(82) “ The phænomenon of sleep
“ and dreaming, which hath been made
“ use of to exalt the nature of matter,
“ and

“ and depress the perfection of the
“ soul; rightly considered shew the
“ very contrary.—The opposition of
“ appearances observable in this state
“ (of *fatigue*, and *activity*, of *insensibility*
“ and *life* at the same time) cannot fail
“ to shew us the opposite natures of the
“ two constituent parts of our compo-
“ sition. If all had been a *blank* of
“ thought and consciousness in sleep,
“ the *soul* would have seemed to be of
“ the same nature with the body: if
“ there had been no *difference* of thought
“ and consciousness *then* and at other
“ times, the *body* would have appeared
“ to be of the same nature with the
“ soul; nor could the *thinking* princi-
“ ple have been so distinguishable.—
“ Who that is rational would choose to
“ be without these informations of an
“ after-existence?—The body no sooner
“ sinks down in weariness and slumber,
“ than this thing within, enters fresh
“ upon other scenes of action:—and
“ this without the subserviency of its
VOL. I. U “ organs,

“ organs, which are then disabled from
 “ its functions. From which it appears
 “ it can be otherwise applied to than by
 “ external objects through the senses.
 “ Now here is such a *contrariety* of na-
 “ tures obviously discoverable, that it
 “ is a wonder men could ever find in
 “ their hearts to ascribe them to the
 “ same thing.” *Baxter's enquiry into nat.*
of the soul, p. 194--270, 4th ed.

(83) The desire of looking into futurity, is so natural to the mind of man; that pretensions to the means of gratifying this innate curiosity, have never been wanting in any age, or in any country. That these pretensions should find faith in vulgar minds, is by no means a matter of wonder: but it is somewhat surprising that those men among the ancients who were once held, and in many respects justly held, the great masters of reason, seem equally to have been infected with the same superstition: at least there is not more than one or two of

of the Greek philosophers, who appear to have rejected divination, in all its various modes, as an absolute fallacy. The very weak arguments by which the truth of divination was thus generally admitted as an article in the philosopher's creed, is a remarkable instance how easily the human mind persuades itself into an opinion which favours its natural bias and propensities. For the principles by which they endeavoured to support this opinion, were founded on assumptions either evidently false, or which were incapable of being proved true. Thus they laid it down as an unquestionable position, *ſi Dii divinatio*; presuming that the knowledge of future events would be an essential advantage to mankind, and, therefore, that the Gods, who were no less beneficent than powerful, had certainly furnished means of acquiring a premonition so necessary to the welfare of the human race. This was the ground upon which the Stoics at least, rested the credibility of divina-

tion in general : and as to that particular mode of it which was supposed to be conveyed in dreams ; it was raised upon a basis equally weak and precarious. For taking it as granted that the intellectual principle in man is an emanation from the great soul which animates the universe, or in other words, a portion of the divine essence ; they proceeded upon a second hypothesis no less arbitrarily assumed, and imagined that the soul during sleep being in some degree disengaged from her intercourse with the body ; recovered in the same proportion the power of exerting those properties *essential* to her divine nature. Reasonings of this kind, together with that wonderful correspondence which has sometimes happened, in almost every man's experience, between the visions of the night and subsequent occurrences ; seem to have procured an earlier and more general belief in the certainty of divination by dreams, than
by

by any other supposed intimations of futurity.

The wise and learned Pythagoras was no less tainted than the rest of the antient philosophers, with this kind of superstition ; but he gave credit to it upon a different principle : for his opinion was, that dreams are suggested, not by the natural powers of the mind, but by those aerial beings, of which some account has been given in the preceding remark.

A late very acute philosopher, pressed by the insuperable objections to the several causes usually assigned of that amazing scenery which is presented to the mind when the outward senses are locked up in sleep, has adopted the same hypothesis. For since these appearances cannot be explained (as he proves in a very satisfactory manner) by any of the known properties of matter, or by the laws of mechanism, and that it would be absurd to suppose, for many

cogent reasons which he specifies, that the soul herself raises up those wonderful visions; he resorts to the agency of intermediate beings, as the only rational solution that can be produced of the effect in question. But although this ingenious author has sufficiently overthrown the former theories that have been advanced on this subject; he has by no means been equally successful in establishing his own: as indeed in the unsubstantial regions of metaphysical speculation, it is generally much easier to pull down the erections already raised, than to build up any thing more solid in their place. The truth is, an unfurmountable objection seems to lie against this author's hypothesis. For surely it is inconsistent with all our notions concerning the goodness of the supreme governor of the universe, to suppose that he delivers up the soul of man defenceless and unguarded, every time he closes his eyes in sleep, into the possession of certain invisible beings,

beings, good and bad, to be treated at their mercy and discretion. But if it be absolutely necessary, in order to account for the phænomenon of dreams, to introduce an immaterial agent; recourse might be had, perhaps, to the antient doctrine concerning plastic natures, as revived in the last century by Dr. Cudworth: and an adroit artificer of hypotheses, might possibly apply that principle to the solution sought for, with equal plausibility, and not altogether so large a demand upon credulity as the assenting to Mr. Baxter's system requires. In the mean time, plain good sense, unadulterated with metaphysical subtleties, will probably think that in questions concerning *causes* which lie too remote for human penetration, *Tacere præstat Philosophis, quàm loqui*. Diog. Laert. in vit. Pythag. Cic. de Divin. passim. Baxter's enquiry into the nature of the soul, p. 169. et seqq.

(84) Cato's patriotism was no pliant principle, which commodiously adapted, or opposed itself, to every state-system, or party-measure, as interest, and ambition directed: it was a steady, equal, vigorous spring of action operating with invariable strength and power, in every occurrence wherein the welfare of his country was concerned. This firm and inflexible spirit of public virtue, necessarily involved him in perpetual contests. For as he endeavoured upon all occasions to restrain the undue influence of the Aristocratical faction in Rome; so the nobles, in their turn, looking upon him as the most formidable enemy of their rising power, never ceased their attempts to blast his well-earned credit with the people. To this end they watched his public conduct with a jealous eye, and seized every the least colourable pretence of arraigning it in legal form. But his unspotted integrity shone the brighter, the more his enemies laboured to sully its lustre; for
altho'

altho' in the course of his long life, he was called forth by no less than fifty different impeachments, to justify his political conduct; yet the reputation of his patriotic virtue was so far from being diminished by these severe inquiries, that it continued to rise in the public esteem to the end of his honourable days. Liv. xxxix. 41. *Corn. Nep. in vit. & Plut. in vit. Caton.*

(85) It seems to have strongly entered into the expectations of those eminent sages of antiquity who embraced the doctrine of the soul's immortality, that the felicity of the next life will partly arise, not only from a renewal of those virtuous connections which have been formed in the *present*, but from conversing at large with that whole glorious assembly whom the poet hath so justly brought together in his description of the mansions of the blest; the

——— *Manus ob patriam pugnando vulnera passi;
 Quique sacerdotes casti, dum vita manebat;
 Quique pii vates, & Phœbo digna locuti;
 Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes,
 Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.*

Virg.

*Patriots who perish'd for their country's right,
 Or nobly triumph'd in the field of fight:
 There, holy priests, and sacred poets stood,
 Who sung with all the raptures of a God:
 Worthies, who life by useful arts refin'd,
 With those who leave a deathless name behind,
 Friends of the world, and fathers of mankind.* }

Pit's trans.

Thus Socrates, in the discourse which his celebrated disciple represents him as making to the judges before whom he was arraigned, expresses the highest satisfaction in the thought that the unjust sentence they were going to pronounce, would open his way to those happy mansions where he should join the company of Orpheus and Musæus, of Homer and Hesiod, together with the rest of those departed spirits who had benefited

benefited mankind by their talents and their virtues.

(86) If there were not different traditions concerning Pelias; Cicero seems to have committed a mistake of memory in this passage: for as Ovid relates the adventure, it was Æson and not Pelias, whose youth was restored by Medea's enchanted cauldron. As to Pelias, the enchantress threw him indeed into her kettle; but with far other intentions. The story as told by Diodorus Siculus, is this: Pelias was king of Thessaly, who having conceived a jealousy of his brother, the father of Jason, contrived while his nephew was absent on the Argonautic expedition, to have the father and all his family assassinated. Jason, at his return, formed a scheme for revenging himself of his uncle's cruelty. To this end, he employed Medea to exercise her arts of enchantment, in order to persuade the old king that she was commissioned by the

the Gods to restore his youth. The stratagem succeeded: and Pelias commanded his daughters to perform the necessary preparations on his body, agreeably to the directions they should receive for that purpose from Medea. In consequence of these injunctions, and in pursuance of Medea's orders, the unhappy princesses were made the instruments of their father's death, by cutting his body in pieces and throwing his limbs into her pretended renovating cauldron. *Ovid, Met. vii. Diod. Sic. v. 3.*

(87) Philosophy can never be employed in an office more unsuitable to her proper character and functions, than in setting forth such representations of human life as tend to put mankind out of humour with their present being: and yet into this unworthy service some eminent moralists, both ancient and modern, have not scrupled to compel her! The genuine effects
of

of true wisdom and knowledge, are altogether of a different complexion; as those speculative writers whose studies and talents have qualified them for taking the most accurate and comprehensive survey of the natural and moral world, have found the result of their inquiries terminate in the strongest motives for a grateful acquiescence in the beneficent administration of providence. To be able indeed to clear up all the difficulties which occur in attempting to account for that degree of evil which the Supreme Creator has permitted to enter among his works; will in vain, perhaps, be expected, 'till the mental sight shall be purged with that heavenly "*euphrasy*," with which the angel in Milton removed the film from Adam's eyes, when he shewed him in vision the fate of his descendants. In the mean time, however, there is abundant evidence to justify the goodness of the Creator in his "*ways to men*," and dissipate every darker cloud which,
in

in a gloomy state of mind, is apt to overcast the prospect of human condition.

The truth is, the *natural* evils of life are but few and inconsiderable when compared with those which are of man's own production. Pain and disease, which now make such a variety of dreadful articles in every estimate of human calamities, would scarcely appear to exist, if the contributions of vice and luxury were fairly subtracted from the account. And when all deductions of this kind are justly made, if we examine the remaining evils to which mankind are *necessarily* exposed; it will appear that providence hath kindly interwoven certain secret consolations and unexpected softenings, which render them more tolerable when realised than they seem in apprehension. Nothing indeed is more certain than what an incomparable moralist, with his usual truth of sentiment and

elegance of imagination, hath finely remarked; that “the evils of this life
“appear like rocks and precipices,
“rugged and barren at a distance;
“but at our nearer approach we find
“little fruitful spots and refreshing
“springs mixed with the harshness and
“deformity of nature.”

To apply this general observation to a particular instance: Those who from the more commodious stations of human life, look down upon the lowest and most laborious classes of mankind, are apt to consider their condition as painful proofs of the miseries to which the majority of the sons of men are inevitably condemned. But in fact, these supposed objects of commiseration, are so far from being in a state deservedly to be lamented, that perhaps they would be very considerable losers if they were to exchange it for a more exalted sphere of action. That this is no ideal representation of their case;
let

let an unexceptionable witness, who had occasion to observe it in some of its strongest exhibitions, attest: “ In
“ my travels,” says the good bishop Pontoppidan, “ over the highest moun-
“ tains of Norway, which are covered
“ with snow, and where horses are of
“ no service, I have seen peasants in
“ great numbers do the work of horses ;
“ and indeed they seem equal to those
“ animals in strength.—They go on
“ *singing* all the while, and hold out
“ for nine hours together at the hard-
“ est labour imaginable, with incredible
“ *cheerfulness* and alacrity.” He adds ;
“ the peasants of both sexes assemble
“ together by hundreds, I might say
“ thousands, about the middle of Ja-
“ nuary, to make their winter harvest
“ of the rich produce of the ocean.
“ They keep out at sea all the day, and
“ a great part of the night by moon-
“ light, in open boats ; and after that,
“ crowd together by scores into little
“ huts, where they can hardly have
“ room

“ room to lay themselves down, in
“ their wet cloaths. The next morn-
“ ing they return to the same laborious
“ employments, with as much *pleasure*
“ and chearfulness as if they were go-
“ ing to a merry-making.”

In contemplating the moral state of mankind, the horror of the view, in like manner, will be much alleviated by taking in every mitigating circumstance that attends the prospect. There is reason to think, with the most judicious writers on this interesting question, that there are few individuals who in the course of their lives have not been the authors of more good than evil. Prejudice, resentment, or opposition of interest may, and often do, produce particular instances of the sad effects of the malevolent and selfish passions, in the very same man who, in the general tenour of his conduct and connections, regularly exercises the kind and social affections. But in de-

termining concerning the comparative prevalency of moral good and evil; a hasty or peevish remarker, while he examines the weight of the malignant action, is not equally careful to enquire into the state of the opposite scale. There are many latent circumstances also necessary to be known, before we are fully qualified to give any particular action its precise and distinguishing denomination. The motive and intention of the agent; the point of view in which the action appeared to his own eye; the degree of surprise or premeditation, of knowledge or ignorance, with which it was committed; are nice discriminations which an uncandid observer always overlooks, and a charitable one cannot often discern; yet these constitute the true nature and essential characteristic of moral conduct.

There is another circumstance which may very much contribute to lead the judgment into unfavourable conclusions
upon

upon this subject : vicious actions strike more forcibly upon the mind, as being in their nature more open to public notoriety, than those of an opposite quality. Atrocious deviations from moral rectitude rarely pass undiscovered ; whereas many of the noblest and most laudable instances of human merit, are frequently known only to the parties immediately concerned, and not seldom lie concealed in the breast of the worthy agent. Vice obtrudes itself upon the public eye ; but virtue must often be sought for in less conspicuous scenes. The *secretum iter*, and the *fallentis semita vitæ*, are the paths in which her votaries are most frequently to be found. No wonder therefore, if in computing their comparative number, very erroneous calculations are apt to be made.

When all reflections of this kind, together with others which might be

mentioned of the same tendency, are duly considered and their full force admitted; it will not, perhaps, be thought an unwarrantable inference, that there is an over-ballance of *good* in the moral, as well as in the natural world. *Spect.* No. 615. *King's origin of evil by Law*, p. 420, *et seqq.* *Hutcheson on the passions*, p. 177, *et seqq.*

(88) Little more is known concerning Cato's son than what has already been mentioned in note 68; that part of Livy in which some particulars of his life were probably related, being lost: and Plutarch only mentions him incidentally. It appears by the latter, that he distinguished his courage in a manner greatly to the satisfaction of his father, and to the glory of his own reputation, in the war under Paulus Æmilius against Perſes king of Macedon. *Liv. Epit.* xlviii. *Plut. in vit. Caton.*

(89) The

(89) The indeterminate manner in which Cicero, in some of his dialogues, discusses the question concerning the soul's immortality, together with certain ambiguous expressions which he drops in other parts of his writings; have given occasion to suspect the firmness of his faith in this important article. A suspicion of the same kind, and for the same reason, seems to have arisen in Cicero's time, with regard to the real opinion which Socrates held on this great point: and the observation the Roman philosopher makes in order to rescue his admired sage from this unjust surmise, is no less applicable to himself. Socrates in the defence he made on his trial, expresses the strongest persuasion that the death he was going to suffer, would be a change of the greatest advantage to him in another state of existence; yet, after all, and in the conclusion of the same speech, he declares himself altogether uncertain of the consequence which would follow that event. Upon

this occasion Cicero remarks, that the sentiments of Socrates concerning the immortality of the soul, were by no means wavering and undetermined; but that he closes his speech in this indecisive manner, in order to persevere to the last in that distinguishing principle of his philosophy, “never to dogmatize upon any subject^a.” The same mode of philosophizing, as it was equally adopted by Cicero, will equally serve to reconcile the seeming fluctuations of his opinion, with his entertaining at the same time a firm expectation of an after-life in some better state. And this observation will appear the more applicable to the present case, by considering the *manner* in which he delivers himself upon those controverted questions of another nature, concerning which it would be absurd to imagine that his notions were unsettled.

^a *Quod præter Deos negat scire quemquam, id scit ipse, utrum melius sit; nam dixit antè: sed suum illud nihil ut affirmet, tenet ad extremum. Tusc. i. 41.*

Thus

Thus in the treatise addressed to Brutus, wherein he explains his ideas of the most perfect species of oratory, and agreeably to which it may well be supposed he endeavoured to form his own, he still preserves the *distinguishing* spirit of his sect; and he concludes that elegant performance with as much doubt and hesitation, as if he had really been at a loss where to fix his judgment in relation to the true principles of an art he had so thoroughly studied, and in which he so eminently excelled ^b.

This might suffice for a general answer: but the question is of some importance, and deserves a more particular examination. For this purpose, it will

^b *Habes meum de oratore, Brute, judicium: quod aut sequere, si probaveris; aut tuo stabis, si aliud quoddam est tuum. In quo neque pugnabo tecum, neque hoc meum, de quo tantopere hoc libro asseveravi, unquam affirmabo esse verius quàm tuum. Potest enim non solum aliud mihi ac tibi, sed mihi aliud aliàs videri. Orator. 71.*

be necessary to remove a prejudice which may be conceived against that sect whose principles, it is well known, Cicero embraced ; as if the doctrine of the Academics directly tended to universal Scepticism. The truth, however, is much otherwise ; as the single difference in this respect between the Academics and the other sects was, that the latter usurped the stile of *demonstration*, while the *former* with much more modesty as well as reason, laid claim only to moral certainty^c. The Academic mode of philosophising was indeed, of all others, the most favourable to the interests of truth and the advancement of real science : for by guarding the mind from a previous bias towards any assumed principles, or an unwarrantable

^c *Neque inter nos et eos qui se scire arbitrantur, quidquam interest, nisi quod illi non dubitant quin ea vera sint quæ defendant, nos probabilia multa habemus quæ sequi facile, affirmare vix possumus. Acad. iv. 2.*

adherence

adherence to systems taken up at an early period of life, and before the judgment was capable of distinguishing between argument and authority; the inquirer came prepared to discuss without prejudice, or predilection, the strength, or weakness, of the several reasons which were urged on each side of any question in debate *d*. But altho' these cautious philosophers were slow in adopting systems, and always more disposed to *examine* than to *decide*; their opinions were by no means for ever in a state of suspense, and perpetually hovering between opposite hypotheses: they disputed, it is true, on every side,

d Hoc autem liberiores & solutiores sumus, quod integra nobis est judicandi potestas; nec ut omnia quæ præscripta & quasi imperata sint, defendamus. Nam cæteris primùm ante tenentur adstricti, quàm quid esset optimum judicare potuerunt; deinde infirmissimo tempore ætatis aut obsecuti amico cuidam, aut una alicujus, quem primùm audierunt, oratione capti, de rebus incognitis judicant: & ad quamcumque sunt disciplinam quasi tempestate delati, ad eam tamquam ad saxum adhærescunt. Acad. iv. 2.

but

but they regulated their conduct only by the principles of one *e*.

If in several, therefore, of Cicero's philosophical pieces, his own notions on the subject are not easily discernable; he keeps them out of sight, not because he was himself undetermined, or had any private reasons for concealing his sentiments, but because he thought it the fairest method to leave the respective arguments of the disputants to make their own proper impressions, without adding his particular authority as an adventitious weight to sway the judgment of the reader *f*.

e *Neque Academici cum in utramque differunt partem, non secundum alteram vivunt. Quint. xii. 1.*

f *Qui autem requirunt, quid quaque de re ipsi sentiamus, curiosius id faciunt quam necesse est; non enim tam auctoritatis in disputando, quàm rationis momenta quærenda sunt. Quin etiam obest plerumque iis qui discere volunt, auctoritas eorum qui se docere profitentur: desinunt enim suum judicium adhibere; id habent ratum quod ab eo quem probant, judicatum vident. De Nat. Deor. i. 5.*

But

But to state this matter fairly, it must be acknowledged that there are two or three passages in Cicero's private letters, which at the first glance, may seem to countenance that suspicion concerning his faith, which it is the endeavour of the present reflections to remove. But upon a nearer and more accurate inspection of these supposed unfavourable declarations, it will appear, in the first place, that without any violence of construction they may be interpreted as meaning nothing more than that "death is an utter extinction of all sensibility with respect to human affairs:" and in the next place, admitting that these passages are so many clear and positive assertions, that "the soul does not survive the body;" yet it would by no means follow that this was Cicero's *real* persuasion. For it has been proved, in several instances produced for that purpose*, that it was usual with him in

* See Cicero's Letters, Vol. ii. p. 232. n. 6.

his private letters to vary his sentiments in accommodation to the particular principles, or circumstances, of the correspondent to whom he was writing.

But if Cicero's true opinion in respect to the interesting question under consideration, is neither to be traced with certainty in his philosophical dialogues, nor to be discovered in his private correspondence with his friends; where then, it may be asked, can we hope to find it?

It should seem that an unprejudiced reader, who attentively perused the foregoing treatise, can be at no loss for an answer to this question. It is true, Cicero speaks throughout that piece in an assumed character; but lest it should be doubted, whether he held the same opinions which he represents Cato to have entertained; he expressly assures Atticus, in the introductory address to him, that he had found so much satisfaction

faction in drawing up the reflections he was going to lay before him, as had rendered his declining age not only an easy, but an agreeable state to him : and that he had fully delivered his *own* sentiments, in those which he had put into the mouth of his venerable countryman *g*.

This essay, therefore, written but a few years before his death, and almost the very last act he exerted in his philosophical character, may be considered as an explicit and unambiguous profession of his belief of the soul's *separate* existence in a future state. And if after so positive a declaration of his being convinced of the truth of this important

g Mibi quidem ita jucunda hujus libri confectio fuit, ut non modo omnes absterferit senectutis molestias, sed effecerit mollem etiam & jucundam senectutem.—Sed quid opus est plura? jam enim ipsius Catonis sermo explicabit nostram omnem de senectute sententiam.
In pref.

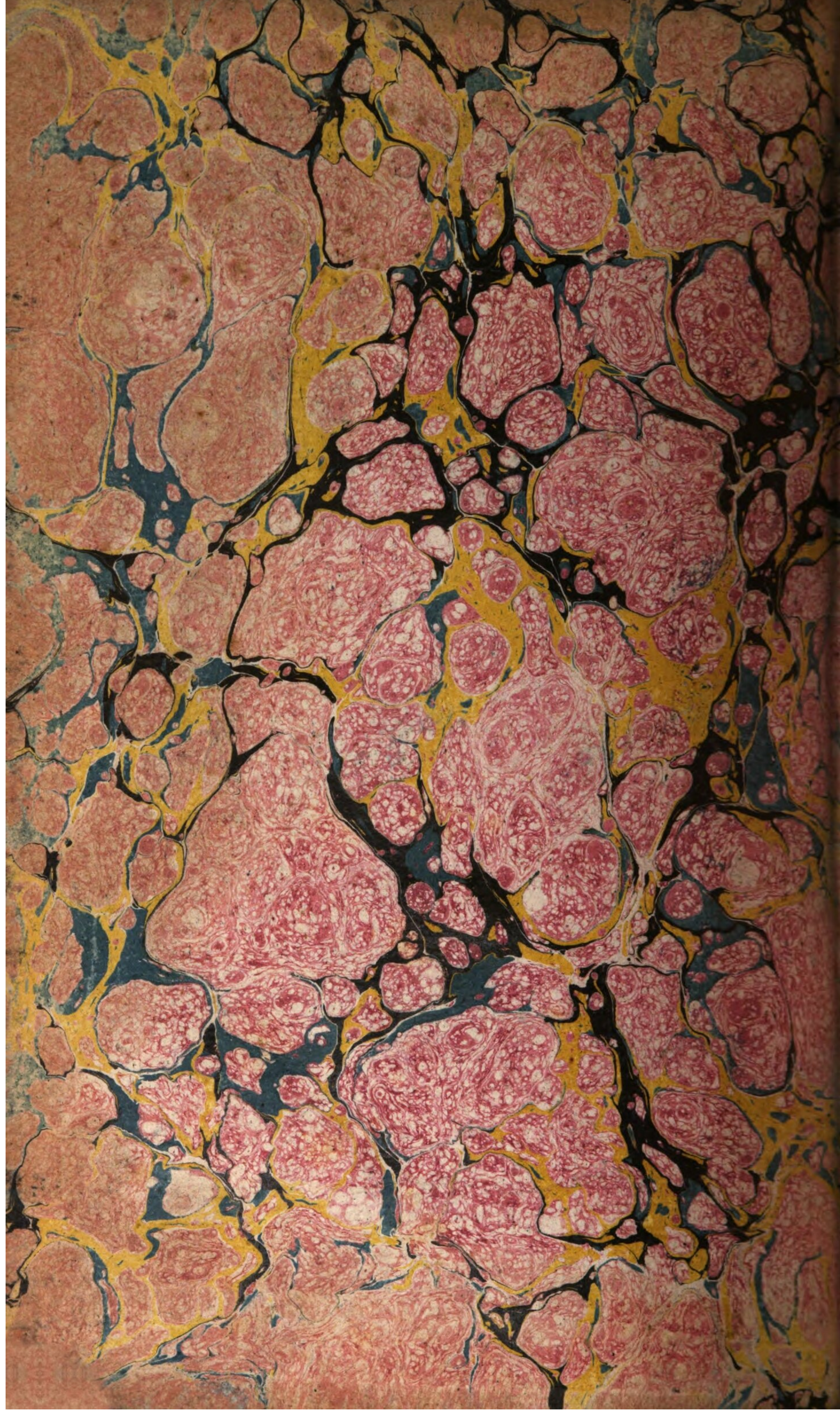
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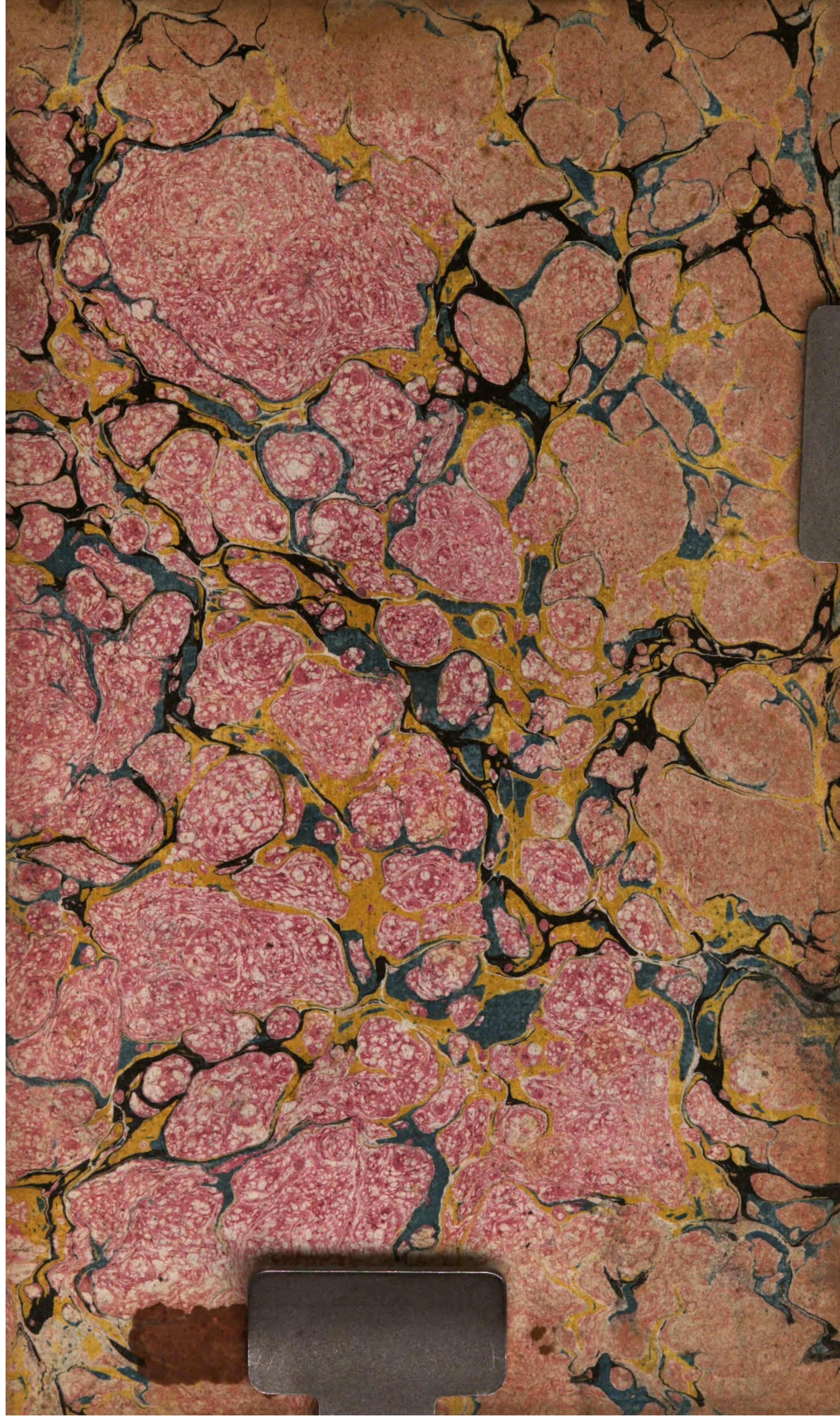
doctrine, the sincerity of his faith might nevertheless be called in question; hard indeed would he have found the task, to give his inquisitors satisfaction.

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Cicero, Marcus Tullius, v106-v43

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